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The Professional Writer

BY W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

IT IS acknowledged that the technique of painting and of musical composition can only be acquired by assiduous labor, and the productions of dilettantes are rightly regarded with good-humored or exasperated contempt. We all congratulate ourselves that the radio and the gramophone have driven from our drawing-rooms the amateur pianist and the amateur singer. The technique of writing is no less difficult than that of the other arts and yet, because he can read and write a letter, there is a notion that anyone can write well enough to write a book. Writing seems now the favorite relaxation of the human race. Whole families will take to it as in happier times they entered religious houses. Women will write novels to while away their pregnancies; bored noblemen, axed officers, retired civil servants, fly to the pen as one might fly to the bottle. There is an impression abroad that everyone has it in him to write one book; but if by this is implied a good book the impression is false. It is true that the amateur may sometimes produce a work of merit. By a lucky chance he may have a natural facility for writing well, he may have had experiences that are in themselves interesting, or he may have a charming or quaint personality that his very inexpertness helps him to get down on the printed page. But let him remember that the saying asserts only that everyone has it in him to write one book; it says nothing about a second. The amateur is wise not to try his luck again. His next book is pretty sure to be worthless.

For one of the great differences between the amateur and the professional is that the latter has the capacity to progress. The literature of a country is made not by a few excellent books, I repeat, but by a great body of work, and this can only be produced by professional writers. The literature of those countries that has been produced chiefly by amateurs is thin in comparison with that of the countries in which a number of men, with difficulty trying to make their living, have followed it as a profession. A body of work, an œuvre, is the result of long-continued and resolute effort. The author, like other men, learns by the method of trial and error. His early works are tentative; he tries his hand at various subjects and various methods and at the same time develops his character. By a simultaneous process he discovers himself, which is what he has to give, and learns how to display this discovery to the best advantage. Then, in full possession of his faculties, he produces the best of which he is capable. Since writing is a healthy occupation, he will probably go on living long after he has done this, and since by this time writing will have become an ingrained habit he will doubtless continue to produce works of no great importance. These the public may legitimately neglect. From the standpoint of the reader, very little that the writer produces in the whole course of his life is essential. (By essential, I mean only that small part of him which expresses his individuality, and I attach no implication of absolute value to the word.) But I think he can only give this as the result of a long apprenticeship and at the cost of a good many failures. To do it he must make literature his life's work. He must be a professional author.

It is evident that no professional writer can afford only to write when he feels like it. If he waits till he is in the mood, till he has the inspiration as he says, he waits indefinitely and ends by producing little or nothing. The professional writer creates the mood. He has his inspiration too, but he controls and subdues it to his bidding by setting himself regular hours of work. But in time writing becomes a habit, and like the old actor in retirement, who gets restless when the hour arrives at which he has been accustomed to go down to the theater and make up for the evening performance, the writer itches to get to his pens and paper at the hours at which he has been used to write. Then he writes automatically. Words come easily to him and words suggest ideas. They are old and empty ideas, but his practised hand can turn out an acceptable piece. He goes down to luncheon or goes to bed with the assurance that he has done a good day's work. Every production of an artist should be the expression of an adventure of his soul. This is a counsel of perfection and in an imperfect world a certain indulgence should be bestowed on the professional writer; but this surely is the aim he should keep before him. He does well only to write to liberate his spirit of a subject that he has so long meditated that it burdens him and if he is wise he will take care to write only for the sake of his own peace. Perhaps the simplest way to break the habit of writing is by changing the environment to one that gives no opportunity for the daily task. You cannot write well or much (and I venture the opinion that you can-

Next Week

HELL ON ICE
By COMMANDER EDWARD ELLSBERG
Reviewed by Felix Riesenberg

JAPAN DEFIES THE WORLD
By JAMES A. B. SCHERER
Reviewed by James F. Green

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not write well unless you write much) unless you form a habit; but habits in writing as in life are only useful if they are broken as soon as they cease to be advantageous.

But the greatest danger that besets the professional author is one that unfortunately only a few have to guard against. Success. It is the most difficult thing the writer has to cope with. When after a long and bitter struggle he has at last achieved it he finds that it spreads a snare to entangle and destroy him. Few of us have the determination to avoid its perils. It must be dealt with warily. The common idea that success spoils people by making them vain, egotistic, and self-complacent is erroneous; on the contrary it makes them, for the most part, humble, tolerant, and kind. Failure makes people bitter and cruel. Success improves the character of the man; it does not always improve the character of the author. It may very well deprive him of that force which has brought him success. His individuality has been formed by his experiences; his struggles, his frustrated hopes, his efforts to adapt himself to a hostile world; it must be very stubborn if it is not modified by the softening influence of success.

Success besides often bears within itself the seed of destruction, for it may very well cut the author off from the material that was its occasion. He enters a new world. He is made much of. He must be almost super-human if he is not captivated by the notice taken of him by the great and remains insensible to the attentions of beautiful women. He grows accustomed to another way of life, probably more luxurious than that to which he has been used, and to people who have more of the social graces than those with whom he has consorted before. They are more intellectual and their superficial brilliance is engaging. How difficult it is for him then to move freely still in the circles with which he has been familiar and which have given him his subjects! His success has changed him in the eyes of his old associates and they are no longer at home with him. They may look upon him with envy or with admiration, but no longer as one of themselves. The new world into which his success has brought him excites his imagination and he writes about it; but he sees it from the outside and can never so penetrate it as to become a part of it. No better example of this can be given than Arnold Bennett. He never knew anything intimately but the life of the Five Towns in which he had been born and bred, and it was only when he dealt with them that his work had character. When success brought him into the society of literary people, rich men and smart women, and he sought to deal with them, what he wrote was worthless. Success destroyed him.

The writer is wise then who is wary of success. He must look with dread on the claims that others make on him because of it, the responsibilities it forces on him, and the hindering activities that it brings in its wake. It can only give him two good things: one, the more important by far, is the freedom to follow his own bent, and the other is confidence in himself. Notwithstanding his pretension and his susceptible vanity the author when he compares his work with what he intended it to be is never free from misgiving. There is so great a distance between what he saw in his mind's eye and the best he has been able to do that for him the result is no more than a makeshift. He may be pleased with a page here or there and regard an episode or a character with approval; I think it must be very seldom that he looks upon any work of his as a whole with complete satisfaction. At the back of his mind is the suspicion that it is not good at all and the praises of the public, even if he is inclined to doubt their value, are a heaven-sent reassurance.

That is why praise is important to him. It is a weakness that he should hanker for it; though perhaps a pardonable one. For the artist should be indifferent to praise and blame, since he is concerned with his work only in its relation to himself, and how it affects the public is a matter in which he is materially perhaps, but not spiritually, concerned. The artist produces for the liberation of his soul. It is his nature to create as it is the nature of water to run down hill. It is not for nothing that artists have called their works the children of their brains and likened the pains of production to the pains of childbirth. It is something like an organic thing that develops, not of course only in their brains, but in their heart, their nerves, and their viscera, something that their creative instinct evolves out of the experiences of their soul and their body, and that at last becomes so oppressive that they must rid themselves of it. When this happens they enjoy a sense of liberation and for one delicious moment rest in peace. But unlike human mothers, they lose interest very soon in the child that is born. It is no longer a part of them. It has given them its satisfaction and now their souls are open to a new impregnation.

In the production of his work, the author has fulfilled himself. But that is not to say that it has any value for anyone else. The reader of a book, the observer of a picture, is not concerned with the artist's feelings. The artist has sought release, but the layman seeks for a communication, and he alone can judge whether the communication is valuable to him. To the artist the communication he offers is a by-product. I am not speaking now of those who practise an art to teach; they are propagandists and with them art is a side issue. Artistic creation is a specific activity that is satisfied by its own exercise. The work created may be good art or bad art. That is a matter for the layman to decide. He forms his decision from the esthetic value of the communication that is offered to him. If it yields escape from the reality of the world he will welcome it, but is very likely at best to describe it only as minor art; if it enriches his soul and enlarges his personality he will rightly describe it as great. But this, I insist, has nothing to do with the artist; it is human that he should be pleased if he has given others pleasure or greater strength; but he should not take it amiss if they find nothing to their purpose in the results of his production. He has already had his reward in the satisfaction of his cre-

(*Continued on page* 16)

Writing "Of Human Bondage"

It seems to me that if the writing of this novel did not finally repress into my subconscious the unhappy memories with which it was concerned it is because the writer is not finally disembarrassed of his subject till his work is published. When it is delivered to the public, however heedless the public be, it is his no longer and he is free from the burden that oppressed him. I called my book "Beauty from Ashes," which is a quotation from Isaiah, but finding that this title had been recently used, I chose instead the title of one of the books in Spinoza's "Ethics" and called it "Of Human Bondage." It is not an autobiography, but an autobiographical novel; fact and fiction are inextricably mingled; the emotions are my own, but not all the incidents are related as they happened and some of them are transferred to my hero not from my own life but from that of persons with whom I was intimate. The book did for me what I wanted, and when it was issued to the world (a world in the throes of a terrible war and too much concerned with its own sufferings to bother with the adventures of a creature of fiction) I found myself free forever from those pains and unhappy recollections. I put into it everything I then knew and having at last finished it prepared to make a fresh start.

From "The Summing Up" by W. Somerset Maugham.

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From One Country Editor to Another

ONE AMERICAN AND HIS ATTEMPT AT EDUCATION. By Frazier Hunt. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

DEAR Frazier Hunt:—

I suppose I should call you Spike, for everyone else does from the Duke of Windsor up the intellectual ladder to Sinclair Lewis whom everybody calls "Red." But someway during all these thirty years of your upward climb, I remember you as the Indiana Editor in the little country town of Alexis who subscribed to the *Emporia Gazette* in the early part of the second decade of this century "when I was young as you were young, and lutes were touched and songs were sung." Better verify this quotation in your Bartlett. Well, I was proud when you sent for my paper to kind of get the hang of your new job in Alexis, and I am still proud on behalf of all the country editors in the world of what you have done since you left Alexis. We have all dreamed of doing some day what you have done, to go out from our small town papers and be world-beating reporters as you have been, seeing the wide, beautiful earth and the fullness thereof. Your background in the Middle West in a little country town was our background. The country towns that you knew and that I knew, and still know, were based upon agriculture. We are all skygazers. For the farm depends on crops and crops on weather and so the merchants in our country towns live in the clouds with the farmer who is today the greatest gambler on earth. He makes a stock speculator or a crapshooter look like a Christian soldier. And that was the outfit you knew. So your whole book carries with it the wall-eyed wonderment of a countryman.

And, by the way, do you realize that you are liable to be a museum piece pretty soon, the man from the country with a rural point of view? America is growing urban and a man who can write a book such as your "One American," bringing the point of view of the common clod-hopping, sod-busting, pumpkin-husking, Hallowe'ening, haymow Lothario, and the courthouse steps philosopher into the world scene, soon will be stuffed and mounted standing alongside the minnesingers, the knights of the tourney, and the Neanderthal man.

It was because you have this gaping awe in looking up with a sunburned palate at the great spectacle of the world that I loved your book. And here is a funny thing. Of course you were impressed when you talked with Lenin, when Gandhi squatted on the floor at your feet, when you gave the Prince of Wales a drink in your own car, when you muscled into Pancho Villa's quarters, when you saw Hitler in his glory after knowing him as a five-cent-stogie politician in Munich. Who would not be impressed with the men, but being impressed did not mean that you were knocking your noggin in abasement before them. You looked them eye to eye, but with tolerance. You do not hold their greatness against them. You saw them as you saw the banker down in Alexis, common men plus a little something that gave them the golden touch and the fool's luck. And I liked that about your book. You approached Sun Yat Sen and Kagawa, the Duchess of Warwick, Quezon, the Filipino dictator, and H. G. Wells, who, by the way, is one of the great re-

FRAZIER HUNT: *On a ranch in Alberta.*

porters of things spiritual in this century, with a decent, manly, Newfoundland dog friendliness. You know, Spike, if you will let me call you Spike this far along in the letter, I have got to hating the feisty patronage of a lot of these intellectual city slickers. I mean the way they take the world's heroes and God himself on their knee and patronize them and tell them the facts of life. You don't. Your idea seems to be to treat world heroes as our *Gazette* reporters treat the lecturers and show people, the big politicians and first, second, and third vice presidents of the state Women's Club—respectfully, decently, in some cases with "wonder, awe, and praise," but without letting the heroes know how much we admire them until after the story is written and the paper is out.

In going out from the country town where we country editors have watched you for nearly thirty years, reporting the world's big banner headline events like the Peace Conference and the World War and the Russian Revolution, you have been in a little bit of a hurry. So inevitably I suppose you are bound to take on the faults of your job. If you had stayed in Alexis you would have known more about Alexis than you do about Moscow and you would have known more about Illinois than you know about China. But maybe, though I doubt it, China is more important than Illinois, and Moscow more important than Alexis. Perhaps a good first-hand knowledge of Alexis and Illinois absorbed during a generation will help the world, though again I am not sure, as much as a two or three months' impression of Moscow and China.

But anyway your swiftly moving panorama is a beautiful job. You are a credit to our profession. You have been and are the country editor's gift to his generation. In flesh and blood you have actually seen the things and done the things that we have only envisioned. But you have done them beautifully. You cannot write much better than we small town boosters can whom you left behind. You are no stylist like Walter Pater and Walter Lippmann, Ernest Hemingway and Thornton Wilder. You sometimes get a wrong font word in your stuff. But nevertheless it is good hot stuff.

And more than that your stuff isn't going to cool off. Fifty or a hundred years from now, maybe longer than that, when the historians are looking for a true picture of the men and the times that dominated the earth in the second and third and fourth decades of this century, they are going to go back to this book "One American" and pick up your story about Hitler in the hall bedroom and the dub he was there, and your sketch of Lenin in Moscow, and your snapshot of the puppet Emperor of Manchuria, and of the Prince of Wales who afterward gave his throne for his lady love. And these little details, small country town items of reportorial interest which you have seen and set down, will be revived and will shine in the annals of those bright, distant days.

I take it that your politics and religion are about two jumps to the left of Norman Thomas, with an occasional spasm of good old rural yearning that the New Deal would crystallize into the sea change which would bring something rich and strange and lovely to our land.

Well, Spike, as long as we are on the subject I have on every other day a letch along the same line. Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays I yearn in your direction. On those fair days I am a two-minute egg. But Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays I get to thinking about the payroll on the *Gazette* and I get a little hard boiled. And now really, in closing, let me hope that sometimes this will find you the same.

—WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE.

Mr. White has for many years edited the Emporia Gazette. *For biographical note on Frazier Hunt, see page 22.*

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Mussolini and the British

ITALY AGAINST THE WORLD. By George Martelli. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1938. $3.75.

Reviewed by VERA MICHELES DEAN

NO book could be more timely at this moment, when the democratic peoples of Britain and the United States are weighing the relative merits of neutrality and intervention in the Far Eastern crisis, than this balanced and penetrating account of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict by a correspondent of the London *Morning Post*. With a discrimination rare in journalistic appraisals of international affairs, Mr. Martelli marshals the arguments presented by Italy, Ethiopia, and the League powers, always probing for facts and motives behind diplomatic verbiage. Particularly valuable is his critical analysis of the attitude displayed by the British public and the British cabinet during a crisis which proved a decisive test not only of collective security but of Britain's foreign policy.

The points brought out by Mr. Martelli are by no means new, but they are set forth with refreshing candor. He makes clear that the ideal of collective security, which in 1919 seemed to offer an alternative to war, failed of realization because the great democracies, in the post-war period, were less concerned with the security of all states, including the vanquished, than with preservation of the *status quo;* and because each successive crisis—Manchuria, Ethiopia, Spain—was viewed by them not as a threat to collective security, but as a threat to their widely divergent national interests. Britain, which after the war had done everything in its power to diminish the striking power of the League as long as the League was primarily used by France to coerce Germany, tried to breathe new spirit into the Geneva institution in 1935, when its own imperial interests seemed threatened by Italy's plans to conquer Ethiopia; and this just at the moment when France, fearful of German expansion on the continent, was least anxious to antagonize Italy by application of the very sanctions it had previously advocated against the Reich.

Nor were British voters clear in their own minds regarding the course they wanted Britain to follow. The very people who had cast their vote in the 1935 Peace Ballot for economic—and many of them for military—sanctions, had in the past vigorously opposed British rearmament, which might have made action against Italy effective. By contrast, fire-eating imperialists who could have been expected to oppose Italian expansion in Africa, were least eager to provoke a conflict which, they feared, might substitute for Mussolini the less attractive alternative of communism. The brunt of Mr. Martelli's criticism, however, is borne by the National government which, for electioneering purposes, created the impression that it was ready to fight to the last ditch on behalf of collective security, when its record proves that its leaders—notably Mr. Baldwin and Sir Samuel Hoare—had never intended to take any action which might antagonize Italy and thus create the risk of a war they were determined to avoid. In other words, while paying lip-service to collective security, they had from the start excluded the possibility of really effective sanctions such as an oil embargo, and had never even contemplated the use of military sanctions. The British cabinet wanted to have their cake and eat it too. In thus attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable, it created the illusion, soon shattered by the Hoare-Laval deal, that Britain was ready to put all the weight of its great economic power behind collective security; and strengthened the impression, not always justly held abroad, that the British hypocritically throw the cloak of moral principles over actions and policies no less self-seeking than those of other peoples.

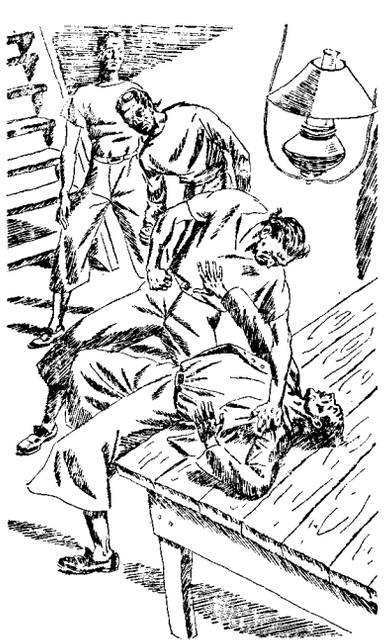
Vera Micheles Dean is editor of the Foreign Policy Association.

Six Heroic Survivors

THE FATE OF THE GROSVENOR. *By Jonathan Lee. New York: Covici-Friede.* 1938. $2.75.

Reviewed by IRVIN ANTHONY

FROM its start "The Fate of the *Grosvenor*" reaches after a generous authenticity. Mr. Jonathan Lee reconstructs the casting away of the staunch East Indiaman on the coast of Africa. Some hundred men sailed from Trincomalee on June 13, 1782, in the *Grosvenor*. One hundred seventeen days later six of them made Capetown in an ox-cart. They were the only survivors. Mr. Lee found the facts of the case heroic, but pitifully terse. He felt the vital, moving story of the ship's people and their adventure. Perforce, to tell it, he has imagined much. Upon the flimsiest of evidence he has had to create the moods of those who lived to trek the tragic miles. In major matters he has been faithful. He has not invented a single one of his characters. He has only selected well and bravely, from among those offered.



DRAWING BY JOHN ALAN MAXWELL
From "The Fate of the Grosvenor."

The story falls into two parts: life on the *Grosvenor*, and life after the shipwreck in the wilderness of Pongoland. Mr. Lee has taken liberties. There is some curious stowage of cargo: pepper and porcelain, and odd hours for the swinging of hammocks. There are moments when the seamen in the *Grosvenor*, under almost man-of-war discipline, speak sentiments not unlike those of the unionized mariner of our own day. Just as the people of the ship threaten to turn stock, and acknowledge their parentage among the clans of Marryat, Cooper, Smollett, and Clark Russell, the *Grosvenor* piles upon the rocks and Mr. Lee leads the survivors ashore.

At once the author is happier, even if his people are not. He has been in Pongoland before, and, with first-hand knowledge at his disposal, he watches his adventurers undertake the dark continent. The characters come to life. The stark, high truth grows. After that, there is nothing for the reader to do but follow breathlessly to the last day of triumph, when a handful of scarecrows blink stupidly at a decently dressed white man, unable to understand that they have really done it: they have escaped from the spell of space and have fallen upon an outpost, an entrance to the civilization of the Cape.

Let the earnest-minded question Mr. Lee's right to improvise emotions and reactions for his eighteenth century characters. The result seems to justify any liberties taken, when the intensity of the relation grips the reader and will not let him go. It may be that parts of the story are at variance with the unknown truth, but the verisimilitude is convincing and there can be only grateful appreciation for the power of the grim tale.

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Blind on Beacon Hill

BOUNDARY AGAINST NIGHT. By Edmund Gilligan. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1938. $2.75.

Reviewed by JOSEPH F. DINNEEN

IN a mass drowning when the subchaser *Ocra* strikes a mine off the Massachusetts coast during the war, the sea reluctantly gives up Benjamin Coventry, a Boston blueblood, who returns stone blind to a Beacon Hill populated by abnormal neighbors. Something is wrong with everybody, even the cop on the beat. The characters introduced are either oversexed, undersexed, prostitutes, or perverts, and those whose lives the blind man touches are deformed or emasculated. Persons die naturally, starve to death, are murdered or commit suicide, and are disposed of with such dispatch that the reader has little opportunity to become acquainted with them.

The plot is elusive, escapes frequently, and I found myself going back, rereading passages and pages with an exasperating feeling that somewhere I had skipped something or had slipped over the keys and explanations. The scene shifts from Beacon Hill to Sudbury, and Wayside Inn is mentioned casually; and some of the same characters, among them the policeman and his prostitute wife, are moved from Beacon Hill to Sudbury.

Soldiers come back from the World War in much the same way they came back from the Civil War, walking home painfully (unlikely, because when soldiers were mustered out they got commutation and fare—and the State gave each a $100 bonus. There are buses and trains from Boston to Sudbury and were then). One of them buries his arm, shot off in France (an impossible touch), at a weird midnight ceremony in Sudbury. The next day one of the soldiers, in whom the reader has been interested for half the book, sees his mother and shoots himself.

At about this time there is introduced the story of a prostitute near Sudbury who used her faithless lover's fresh grave for his successors.

Davart

EDMUND GILLIGAN

Some of the remaining characters come back from Sudbury to Boston on the eve of the Boston Police strike. Calvin Coolidge makes a brief appearance, but nobody who knew Cal will recognize him except for his name. Here Gilligan changes pace, and the story becomes a series of bulletins. In the riot that follows the strike, a girl from Sudbury whom blind Benjamin was to marry is raped four times by Negroes on Beacon Hill. All of the characters are killed, and blind Benjamin, shot between the eyes on T Wharf, falls overboard to be swept out to sea and joins his shipmates on the *Ocra*.

It is obviously the end and purpose of the book to dramatize the Boston police strike as a night of looting and rapine, and when he gets to this point, Gilligan succeeds in doing it very well. There are patches of beautiful writing, but there are times when the story and its characters are bewildering and contradictions repeatedly baffle the reader.

Gilligan was a reporter in Boston and many of us recognize his patrolman Hargedon, and to those who know, his presentation is a masterpiece. Unfortunately readers elsewhere do not and his picture will be lost upon them. Gilligan has had this one in his system for a long time and now that he is rid of it, his next should be a real and important novel.

Joseph F. Dinneen is a Boston journalist and author of "Ward Eight."

When Queer People Act More Queerly

THE MOON IS MAKING. By Storm Jameson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1937. $2.50.

Reviewed by HERBERT J. MULLER

WHEN its jacket announces that "The Moon Is Making" has "a plot which cannot be summarized and an appeal which cannot be defined," there would seem to be little for an ordinary reviewer to say. But actually, one of the characters gets within striking distance at least of the appeal. "You know they say that when the moon is making, queer people behave more queerly," he remarks "slyly." This novel is full of queer people, and the moon is pretty consistently on the make. Miss Jameson's treatment of this subject, however, is hardly sly: she is much in earnest, and at the end explicit.

Most of the action centers about the Wikker family, living in the little Yorkshire town of Wik. With one exception, its older members are grotesquely avaricious, gross, malicious, cruel—as monstrous a set as a hardened contemporary could ask for. But Miss Jameson dwells upon them chiefly to emphasize the one exception, Handel Wikker; it is he who finally dominates the novel and embodies

STORM JAMESON

her main intention. Loathing all injustice, he attempts to practise literally the teachings of Christ. He is in other words perhaps the queerest of the lot; and so he is driven to his death by an outraged community.

It is perhaps both unnecessary and unfair to say that "The Moon Is Making" suffers by comparison with, say, "The Brothers Karamazov." But if Miss Jameson could not, by taking thought, become Dostoievsky, she might profitably have studied his intensive method. The most serious specific fault of her novel lies in her technique. She has strung together many short episodes, each centering in some one of the older Wikkers or their offspring, and the focus shifts before the scene has been solidly developed. In striving for size and breadth she has achieved mostly diffuseness; even her main intention is lost in the shuffle, not emerging clearly until near the end. Drama is further deadened by the weight of mere exposition entailed in moving some fifty characters through as many years.

"The Moon Is Making" is nevertheless a respectable achievement. Considering that Handel Wikker often expresses her own deep convictions, Miss Jameson tells his story with laudable fairness and restraint. More to the point, she renders her Yorkshire landscape vividly, and without losing sight of her characters. She makes her queer people credible, occasionally memorable. Ann, Semiramis, and Ezekiel Wikker are, despite their repulsiveness, not only human but impressive; they take on a kind of monstrous grandeur in their unquenchable vitality, the integrity and force with which to the end they continue to be themselves, without apology, pretense, or self-pity. And when Handel Wikker finally emerges from the crowd to take over the center of the stage, the drama approaches austere tragedy.

Herbert J. Muller is the author of "Modern Fiction: A Study of Values." *See page 22 for biographical note on Storm Jameson.*

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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C-Plus Fiction

THE Bureau of Internal Revenue, which invokes neither logic nor justice nor yet common sense in assessing taxes on literary incomes, nevertheless has one regulation of great though possibly inadvertent merit. The literary person is permitted to deduct as business expense the money spent for books "used professionally but not of permanent value." The phraseology has the aptness of good prose and, what is more, shows that literary criticism has become one of the functions of expanding government.

The regulation takes account of marginal utility and seems particularly apt on those occasions when, metropolitan housing being what it is, you get round to doing something about the books that are piled in corners and clothes-closets and under the guest-room bed. At first there is an automatic objection to selling a book, giving it to a friend or a hospital, or, worst of all, throwing it away. Part of that objection belongs to literary tradition and part to ambiguous psychic energies which it would be indiscreet to probe. But it is followed by a vigorous reaction. Ten, twenty-five, fifty, perhaps a hundred books are quickly brought together for scrapping, and there is a giddy moment of wondering whether the whole east wall can't be cleared. The marginal utility of some books, you suddenly realize, can be very small.

If the owner of the condemned books has any prominence in what has been called the literary world, many of them were given to him by publishers hoping for a blurb or authors hoping for even more direct advertising. But a good many others were bought—and the owner cannot remember just why. What mania was on him when he paid four dollars for an account of a journey to Mongolia—he who will accept no invitations beyond 85th Street, hates the smell of rancid tobacco, and loathes buttered tea? Here is a reprint of Sidney's "Apologie for Poetrie" which cost him sixty cents two years ago and has never been opened—what impulse of pedantry, exhibitionism, or inferiority made him buy that? Here is a book of last Spring on the war in Spain, which is just a book on the war in Spain, as he must have known when he bought it. (That was before the publishers retooled and went into production with books on the war in China.) Here is a book of mathematical puzzles—he despises puzzles and knows no mathematics. Here are three prophecies of the new economic order (contradictory), two treatises on the Dust Bowl (evangelical), a book of reminiscences by a theatrical manager, another by a stamp collector, two more by surgeons, a treatise on space-time, a two-fifty novel.

Let us look at the last one. Two dollars and a half would pay the gas bill for two weeks or buy a good shirt or a better necktie, a pretty good dinner for two or an excellent dinner for one. It would buy a rosebush for your garden or a bottle of Château Léoville-Poyferré, 1929. It might have gone on your doctor bill or your insurance premium, but instead it bought a novel, which you have read once and are now not only willing but eager to throw away.

It is a C-plus novel. It is a pretty good story about people moderately well observed, written in fairly facile prose, pleasantly helped out with some humor here and some genuine pathos there. And it is nothing more. It cost two dollars and fifty cents, took the best part of two evenings to read, and has been lying ignored on an end-table ever since. Was it worth that fraction of the insurance premium? Was it as good a buy as a white broadcloth shirt with French cuffs and collar attached? Did it give as much satisfaction as a good dinner, or as much pleasure as a bottle of Léoville? Can its purchase be justified in economics or ethics or psychology?

At its simplest, the service which C-plus fiction renders is that of relaxing a reader's mind. It enables him to forget unfinished business; it distracts his attention and makes the routine of life withdraw a little way, exactly as a cocktail does (ten cents at home, forty at a bar). A degree beyond that, it occupies empty time and prevents boredom, like a rubber of bridge on a dull evening (though bridge might return a net profit of seventy-eight cents). So far it has done no more than any other kind of reading matter, but at the next degree it begins to exercise the specific powers of fiction and acts as a mild analgesic. It begins, that is, to feed the reader's phantasy life and to give him satisfactions that destiny has denied him. He spends some hours with people more brilliant or more adventurous or perhaps more unfortunate and helpless than he, and observes experience without exertion or participation. Beyond that comes a service which has a social as well as a private value, that of releasing small cupidities and cruelties and venalities; emotional tone is thus raised and both the reader and his family profit. Finally, so far as he may participate in the action of the novel, there is a gain in experience. This has some value as information: if he is ever suspected of bigamy, thrown in the company of underworld characters, or stranded in Mexico with a café girl, he will know how to behave; if any of his friends are, he will be able to sympathize.

This adds up to something but whether it is worth two-fifty must depend on one's native extravagance or parsimony. The total contains nothing from the upper dimensions of fiction. A Professor of Education, "correlating" a C-plus novel with weekly half-hours of civics and ten-minute sessions on the coming world socialism, could refer to it as "illustrative material" perhaps but certainly not as "education by sharing and doing." Good fiction is more than "illustrative material." It enriches the reader's experience by making him understand the lives it deals with, making him believe in their dignity, making him sympathize with them. It gives him charity by forcing him to understand himself, forcing him to acknowledge that there but for the grace of God, or there by the grace of God, goes he. It gives him knowledge, even wisdom. But there are very few novelists who have knowledge and wisdom, who can pass them on, who can force a recalcitrant, slothful, and inattentive reader to share the experience of a novel, understand it, and feel humble. The few who do exist write novels worth two dollars and a half and any additional sum necessary. But you pay two-fifty apiece for a lot of C-plus novels every year. Some hope goes into every purchase, and the experience of hope is doubtless valuable for itself alone, but the end-product is less sure. Wouldn't it have been more intelligent to go to the movies and save two-ten toward a windshield-defroster?

At those periodic shelf-cleanings, it looks as though the answer were yes. There it is, a commonplace novel which you read once but have forgotten as completely as the radio program you tapered off with. Clearly it was an unjustifiable extravagance, orchids on a budget that would have been better served with corn-meal mush. The extravagance is easily rationalized by literary people and by those who love literature sincerely enough to have a genuine interest in its relatives by marriage and adoption—though both classes have an obviously pathological habit of buying trivial books in which they aren't interested and for which they have no analyzable desire. But even if those two classes are satisfied with C-plus novels, it is hard to see how *l'homme moyen sensuel* gets his money's worth. The editor has no solution. Oh, bring them out at forty cents, perhaps, to compete with the movies. Or publish them direct for the settlement houses which eventually inherit them in a gratuitous indignity to the poor.

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Letters to the Editor: *The Critics and Robert Frost*

"The Dignity of Man"

SIR:—I read with great zest and satisfaction the fine article in your issue of January 1st, entitled "Robert Frost and the Critics," by Bernard DeVoto.

What more auspicious literary opening for the new year could be eventuated than the straight, clean blows, the rapier-like thrusts, against the whole herd of bewildered moderns, both critics and camp-followers, who endeavor *always* to be "in the mode"? The argument, too, unfailingly, is based on the rock-bound tenets of literary scholarship and practical philosophy, for which I congratulate you. The whole issue, it would seem, resolves itself around the phrase "the dignity of man." Is it not a fact that the frenzied disciples of modernism in all its forms are ashamed to acknowledge that mankind possesses an inherent nobility, from the lowest representative to the highest of the Race? They are myopic in this, they see Man as an animal; men and animals, so-called, are the same, and this colors all their thinking and muddies up all their performance.

I was particularly glad to note that a journal of the reputation enjoyed by *The Saturday Review of Literature* both here and abroad, had the fortitude and good taste to explode once and for all the sacrosanct infallibility of the ultra-moderns—those egocentric self-righteous writers and scriveners of this small, pin-point world.

J. CORSON MILLER.

Buffalo, N. Y.

tecla

SIR:—Herewith a reasonably puristic objection to your capitalizing "tecla" (*SRL* Jan. 8, your editorial). The word appeared in lower-case in A. Edward Newton's "Amenities of Book Collecting" (1918) and in my "Westward" (1930); your use of it (1938) marks the third appearance of that word in the higher literature, and therefore firmly implants it in the language. I write in hope that you will do as much for the curate's egg, an allusion to which I have not seen since an essay of Chesterton's in 1925.

E. DOUGLAS BRANCH.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

(The editor stole the term from "Westward." He regards Mr. Branch as the proprietor and will use lower-case hereafter.)

Answering Carolyn Wells

SIR:—As the only Double-Crostic solver whose definite times were published before Carolyn Wells wrote her letter, may I say that at first I shared her attitude heartily and unreservedly? May I add that I indicated in my letter that I do not work under pressure? So I constantly enjoy the good features Carolyn Wells so glowingly describes. Further, after solving each of my first score or two of puzzles, I always at once read over the definitions and answers and was as enthusiastic as Carolyn Wells.

But irritating definitions began to appear, such as inserting irrelevant items or using forced interpretations which cannot be called "literary" even when some slight color for them can be found somewhere between the covers of a huge dictionary. I always appreciate the quotations but I have long since lost my first joy in "the delicious flavor of her clever definitions." One tainted egg can ruin the flavor of a big omelet.

HAROLD A. SNYDER.

Tarrytown, N. Y.

SIR:—Evidently Mr. Harold A. Snyder regards the solving of a Double-Crostic as a contest instead of a pleasure. No doubt he would motor over the Redwood Highway at 60 miles an hour, and never see a tree unless he hit it. Is everything subservient to speed?

To work a Double-Crostic brings us in touch with poets and sages and historians. Elizabeth Kingsley opens a thousand roads leading to the past, with vagrant little lanes of thought luring us from the highway. I consult my encyclopedia to learn about toreadors, and find myself reading of Torquemada.

The mental stimulus of a Double-Crostic is so keen, so refreshing, that I am always sorry when my struggle with words is rewarded, and ended.

LUCY A. NEWELL.

San Francisco, Cal.

"THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THIS HISTORY, PROFESSOR FOLSOM. IT SAYS ALL THE CHARACTERS ARE FICTITIOUS."

"Gone with the Wind"

SIR:—About Mr. Holmes Alexander's letter on "Gone with the Wind." . . .

Oh, fie, Mr. Alexander! Chivalry has no place in literary criticism.

Do you suppose, Editors, that Mr. Alexander—as well as the Pulitzer committee—is unacquainted with the requirements stated so clearly by the late Mr. Pulitzer in regard to what kind of novel should win the yearly prize? May I be so bold as to suggest to Mr. Alexander that a book as popular as "Gone with the Wind" has, perhaps, a good sized portion of mediocrity in it to account for its indiscriminate appeal?

You editors acquitted yourselves admirably concerning the charge that reviewers are "backbiters who review because they cannot write." But you were too modest. You should have told Mr. Alexander that reviewing books demands a keen, analytical mind and an unimpassioned system. The blood pressure must not rise unduly. You should have told him that a reviewer has to be erudite enough to give an adequate synopsis of the book he reviews and also a comprehensible criticism of it in little more than one column. And then, after all, why didn't you tell him that some of you boys have written poetry, stories, and books?

BESS MORGAN.

Chicago, Ill.

Erratum

SIR:—In the next to last paragraph of my article, "Including the Scandinavian" (*SRL*, Jan. 15), is a reference to literary prize awards which amount not to five dollars, as printed, but to five thousand dollars. My carbon copy traces the blame for this to a typographical error in my original which I apparently overlooked and failed to correct. Would you print a correction of this serious mistake of mine in an early issue? I would greatly appreciate such a favor.

FAIRFAX DOWNEY.

New York City.

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Poet in Extremis

THE FIFTH DECAD OF CANTOS. By Ezra Pound. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1937. $1.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

THE position of Ezra Pound in the world of letters today is an unusually sad one. It is the position of a man who has designed and deserted so many theoretical schools that his sense of structure and even his technique of escape forsakes him. Instead of mounting to the top of his ivory tower, he now finds himself sticking his bewildered head out of a subterranean, not quite bullet-proof shelter. Beginning as a pioneer of Imagism and a leader of Vorticism, he has ended as a camp-follower of Fascism. Once the white hope of the radical, he is now repudiated by them.

As artist Pound has suffered similarly from his confused allegiances. His poetry has progressively shown the unhappy effects of his polemics; today it is a jumble of archaic records and contemporary headlines, of spasmodic angers and erudite ironies, of abstract images and personal hieroglyphs. In the latest ten cantos (XLII to LI) of this "poem of some length," which Pound threatens to make an even hundred or bust, the author spills his effects with hands so lavish that the (esthetic) right hand is often at variance with the (politically speaking) left. A vague pattern is sensed rather than seen; but there is little that is integrated, unless chaos itself is the design. There is much about the world's banking systems with variations on usury, something (not too comprehensible) from the Greek and the Chinese, the usual patois of abbreviations and foreign phrases, and a few thin jokes, such as spelling Chesterton "Xtertn" and Washington "VashiNNtonn." But, except for an occasional sharp phrase and an isolated clear picture—particularly in XLVII—nothing is more vivid than the confusion and Pound's effort to scramble out of it. It is a futile effort in which even Pound's gift of verbal precision is lost.

It is a disheartening spectacle. Shorn of his once distinctive language sense, Pound's idiom has become almost as shoddy as his attitude. On the jacket Ford Madox Ford assures the reader that Pound has "the secret power over the heart-strings that is given only to such poets as save lost empires from oblivion and redeem races from ignominy." Nothing ever written by Mr. Ford—or Mr. Pound or "Xtertn" or anyone—is funnier than that magnificently incongruous and wholly comic sentence.

Nothing Is Long Ago

BY THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL

HERE in America nothing is long ago:
George Washington was never in Oregon,
He never saw a Flathead woman flop
Her breast across her shoulder to a child,
He never saw the stranded cedar bark
Blow from her salmon thighs like a weaver's thrums.

But it wasn't long ago.

The corn came quick enough
For Buffalo Bill to eat it out of a can
In a barber shop in a circus tent in London.
You used to see the old man hanging around
The City Desk as if it were a bee tree.

We cut the trees so quick for planting corn,
Your grandfather on the wall had time to push
A lever on a morning-glory trumpet:

The-Ed-dis-son-ree-kaw-ding-awk-kes-straw
with-elephants-with-elephants-with-elephants
to-ride-upon-my-little-Irish-Rose . . .

Nothing is long ago when you hear a saw:
It cuts so quick the centuries of pitch
The seasons wrap in rings around a tree,
The trunk will scream in two before your eyes,
Before your lips can move enough to say:

Is it the whine of a soggy witch in Boston?
Is it a cut slave shrieking like a bob-cat?
Is it a woman splitting in Missouri
to give a man child to the Rocky Mountains?

MARY BORDEN

Friday to Tuesday

STRANGE WEEK-END. By Mary Borden. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

THE tired British ruling class Carries On over the week end in Mary Borden's latest novel even though the hero drives his wife's brother to suicide rather than Betray his Trust. A gently sentimental American millionaire comes all the way from California to spend Christmas at the hero's country place, having some notion of walking off with the hero's wife, but the spectacle of an under-secretary refusing to tip off his brother-in-law to an Official Secret touches his better nature, and he goes back to the States only with a Spanish madonna, for which the hero quaintly charges him five thousand pounds. There are boys and dogs and a couple of faithful servants and a jolly scene in a railway carriage and the usual cloud of mistresses and infidelities—what the jacket calls "indiscretions, both private and public, among London's most exclusive social political set." The story is told in a sort of desperately offhand manner.

If you like fiction about "London's most exclusive social political set," "Strange Week End" is the kind of fiction you like. A Marxist critic could have a lot of fun with this book as a reflection of a decaying capitalist class; but it strikes this reviewer that it is a reflection of a decaying fictional genre instead. Mary Borden strikes in somewhere between E. Phillips Oppenheim and John Galsworthy; but the book is neither candidly a novel of political intrigue nor strongly a social study of a particular class and its *mores;* and the resultant mixture does not seem very important.

See page 22 for biographical note on Mary Borden.

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Reading in the Depression

PEOPLE AND PRINT: SOCIAL ASPECTS OF READING IN THE DEPRESSION. By Douglas Waples. Chicago: cloth, University of Chicago Press, 1938, $1.50; paper, Social Science Research Council, N. Y., $1.

Reviewed by ROBERT S. LYND

WE know relatively little about who reads what and why. Professor Waples, of the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago, is probably the best-informed person in the country about American reading habits. This book by him is one of a series of research monographs, sponsored by the national Social Science Research Council, on social trends in the current depression. Aimed primarily at stimulating the researcher to undertake further work in what Professor Waples calls "the sociology of reading," it nevertheless contains much information of interest to all persons interested in the place of the printed page in our culture.

Among the hypotheses thrown out for further investigation are the following: "The most persistent readers before, during, and after depression are found in the same social groups"; "changes in the reading behavior of different social groups reflect different means and degrees of resistance to the depression"; "the importance of reading depends upon the cultural patterning of the community"; "like-minded people read the same things"; "the normal reader's interest in a given subject is but dimly reflected by what he actually reads"; "the normal reader is more attracted by the style than by the subject matter of his reading."

In the major portion of the book, which is devoted to the reporting of specific findings by Professor Waples and his associates, based both on all available printed statistics of the book, periodical, and newspaper publishing industries and public libraries and upon special sample studies not heretofore published, such findings as the following are presented: The depression dropped total *copies* of books of all kinds, new as well as reprint, printed in the United States in the bottom depression year 1933 to half the 1929 total; the number of new book *titles* published dropped to four-fifths of the 1929 total; while the number of new editions and reprintings of old books dropped to two-thirds of the 1929 figure. Magazine circulation was less hard hit than that of books, weeklies actually gaining in total volume of circulation, while monthlies fell off by a quarter by 1933. Index numbers for the total number of magazines sold (by subscription and newsstand) in a selected sample group of cities, using 1929 as a base of 100, show the following shifts by 1933: The "All radio and movie" group rose to 168; "Detective and adventure," 124; "Elite" group (*New Yorker, Esquire*, etc.), 121; "Farm," 106; "Five cent weeklies," 106; "Parents, women's, home" remained at 100; while all other groups registered losses. It is significant of something—you guess what—that the "True Story and other love" group, which stood at 96 in 1933, was at 130, well up among the leaders, in 1935. The "Liberal and radical" group, after going to 114 in 1931, sagged to 63 in 1934, and recovered only to 75 in 1935. Daily newspapers in the English language, after reaching an all-time "high" of 32.4 copies daily per hundred of population in 1929, dropped to a "low" of 28.0 in 1933.

THE READING ROOM: *Engraving by Stanley Anderson, from "Fine Prints of the Year, 1931" (Minton, Balch).*

If the number of new book *titles* in each of the Dewey subject classfications published in the United States in 1929 be taken as a base of 100, "Fine arts and music" rose to 165 in 1933, "Games and sports" to 129, "Sociology and economics" to 127, "History" to 114, "Fiction" stood practically unchanged at 98, while all other classes fell off to indexes of from 65 to 81. Professor Waples suggests that publishers "were adding more titles in 1929 than the market would stand and that they are making the most of the market for reprints and new editions."

Professor Waples's study of the reading habits of a representative sample of 6,850 residents of South Chicago in 1933 shows that 28.6 per cent of the books they had read in the period for which their reading was checked had come from public libraries, 21 per cent had been borrowed from friends, 10.3 per cent had been purchased at bookstores, 5.5 per cent had come from rental libraries, and 34.6 per cent from "All other sources" (professional free copies from publishers, books owned by one's business office, club, etc.). Here is eloquent testimony as to the plight of the retail bookstore! These source figures, combined with sources of magazines read, are also presented broken down by sex and age groups. Among the figures worth noting here are the following: Of all books and magazines purchased from bookstores by women, the percentage purchased by women who were in the age group 30-44 was 50 per cent higher than the percentage purchased by men who were in that age group; but the percentage so purchased by women who were in the age group 45 and over fell to but half the percentage purchased by men of this age. The percentage of reading material secured from public libraries by girls of ages 10-19 is noticeably lower than the percentage by boys of this age; while relatively more of the reading of men of ages 20-44 than of women of these ages came from libraries. More of the reading of boys of ages 10-19 is borrowed from friends than is true in the case of girls, while the reading of women 45 and over is more often borrowed from friends than is the reading of men of those ages. Rental libraries supply more reading to women of ages 20-29 than they do to men of those ages, and less of the reading of women than men at ages 45 and over. A noticeably larger share of the reading of males than of females with only grade school education comes from bookstores, while of those with high school or college educations women predominate as patrons of bookstores. Caution should be exercised in using these generalizations, however, as most of them are based on relatively small totals of books and magazines.

Interesting figures are presented on book borrowing from New York City public libraries by class of book and by occupation of borrower. New York City library circulation of twenty-five selected books on economics and current events, by title, for "Professional and students" and "All others," and by males and females, is also shown.

Professor Waples quite properly points out the spotty and inconclusive nature of his findings and notes that a major lion in the path of more adequate coverage of the problem is the unwillingness of publishers to grant access to their records.

Robert S. Lynd is co-author of "Middletown" and "Middletown in Transition."

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Characters of the Renaissance

MOULDERS OF DESTINY: Renaissance Lives and Times. By Lloyd W. Eshleman. New York: Covici-Friede. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

MR. ESHLEMAN has set out to illustrate, or prove, a few generalizations about European history in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by means of short essays on ten individuals—Lorenzo Valla, Charles VII of France, Henry VII of England, Machiavelli, Raphael, Paracelsus, Loyola, Catherine de Medici, Don John of Austria, and Jan Coen. He avoids calling them "typical," but it is clear that they furnish for him something like what less determinedly original writers than Mr. Eshleman might call a cross-section of Renaissance activities. No one else, presumably, would have chosen the identical ten. This reviewer, for instance, finds the omission of Montaigne a shocking gap. But you can't expect agreement on lists of this sort—not on the hundred best books, nor the ten most American writers, nor the dozen greatest inventors, nor the all-Winooski Valley hockey team.

There is a good deal of interesting material scattered about in these essays, but the net effect is chaotic and jerky. Perhaps Mr. Eshleman disdained to use the orderly forms for narrative and analysis which most historians, even though their formal training in English composition is very weak indeed, learn in their apprentice days to handle more or less successfully. There is, however, no sign that he has tried to adapt some of Mr. Dos Passos's or Mr. James Joyce's methods to formal history, nor, indeed that his failure to compose conventionally is anything beyond a somewhat wilful intention of his own. Certainly the ordinary cultivated reader will not find anything like the pleasure in these pages that he has found in the recent work of Mr. Ralph Roeder on almost exactly the same subject. All ten of Mr. Eshleman's people stay as dead as any ten ever embalmed in a preacher's or a teacher's abstractions, and poor old Machiavelli especially so. Even Joan of Arc seems no more than an agent of Charles VII and destiny. It is, of course, a very difficult thing indeed to bring people back to life on the printed page, but any good novelist can do it, and any great historian.

That part of the historian's task which consists in putting generalizations about "trends" and "times" into patterns is a whole lot easier to do and harder to criticize. Mr. Eshleman's pattern certainly looks familiar in its broad lines: out of the darkness of medieval conformity, pessimism, Christian faith, collectivism, reliance on authority, comes about 1300 a dawning of skepticisim, individualism, hope, experimentation, and lo! modern man emerges, naked in his lusty youth, with a far-away look in his eyes, for he knows already that he is Faust. Shaking off the ascetic trammels of the Middle Ages, he gets to work at once being lusty, and the lid is off on adultery, poisoning, rapine, drunkenness, and great art. This is perhaps a bit confusing, and not altogether fair to Mr. Eshleman. Yet one would welcome a writer on the Renaissance who, before he wrote, honestly tried to answer the question: what kinds of human behavior that I find recorded in 1500, say, can I find no important traces of in 1100, or 1200? He might then conclude that the Renaissance had been too often contrasted, too rarely compared, with the Middle Ages.

Certainly Mr. Eshleman's book fails to live up to the expectations of novelty one gains from reading its preface and its jacket. This seems to be the same old Renaissance we knew in school. Perhaps Mr. Eshleman should have been warned —Montaigne could have warned him— that in general, originality is more effective if it is allowed to steal upon the reader unannounced, and gradually impress itself upon him. The reader who is warned too vigorously that he is going to find something new and startling is likely to look too hard for it, and miss it. Perhaps something of the sort has happened to this reviewer.

Crane Brinton is a member of the department of history of Harvard University.

Interviews De Luxe

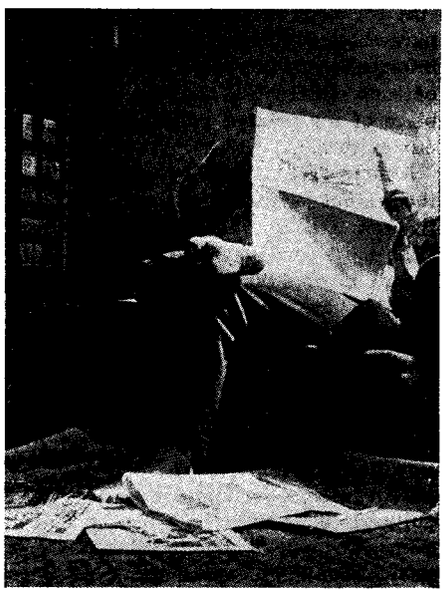
MY EARS ARE BENT. By Joseph Mitchell. New York: Sheridan House. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT STRUNSKY

JOE MITCHELL is one of the better feature writers in the New York newspapers and comes very near to being the best. This does not include the professional columnists, who are a non-pressure group and obey no laws. Every day an average of 383,679 people see Mitchell's name in the *World-Telegram* and a large portion of them read his stories with pleasure and edification. The chances are that very few of them remember his name or realize that he is the author of the story they are reading. This is a peculiar condition with newspaper signatures, or by-lines—almost, you might say, a social phenomenon. Unless the story appears in the same place every day, and unless the author's name is in 12-point type, and unless it is accompanied by a photograph that has no relation to his face, it is unlikely that he will be remembered. The average newspaper by-line is the next thing to anonymity despite the fact that it is dearly prized by every reporter.

Nevertheless Joe Mitchell is still one of the better feature writers in the New York newspapers. Most of them are fairly self-conscious about their jobs and when assigned to cover a fugitive ostrich go into a sort of literary convulsion in front of their typewriters. Mitchell, on the other hand, writes straight from the shoulder, with a simple clarity and a fine, but restrained feeling, for the meaning of words.

This book contains a collection of stories he has written for the *World-Telegram,* the *Herald Tribune,* and the *New Yorker.* They have been carefully combed for color and variety. They are chiefly a



"PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR"
From "My Ears Are Bent."

series of interviews with fan-dancers, local evangelists, Bowery derelicts, immigrant shopkeepers, and some of the more desperate characters of the city.

They are all good stories, with recurring flashes of inspiration. One interesting thing about them is that they read better in book form than in the newspapers. Mitchell obviously went over them, gave them greater flexibility and ease than a newspaper will permit, rounded off the sharp edges which characterize even the best of newspaper stories. He did this without altering the content or taking undue advantage of his new latitude. The result should be that 383,679 people will read them with even greater enjoyment than they did the first time.

Robert Strunsky was formerly on the staff of the New York Sun.

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The Bowling Green by Christopher Morley

St. Agnes Eve

JOHN WINTERICH has long been one of my most admired writers about books. He has a quick humor in his pen, but beyond that the specialized prescience for paradoxes and problems that engage the bibliophile. So it was good pleasure to find (in a bookstore in New London) a work of his that I had not known. It was first published (1929) as *Books and the Man* but is now more likely to be met in the oversize Halcyon House reprint ("Custom-Built Editions" they call them, which I'm sure amuses Mr. Winterich as it does me). The Halcyons, brooding on the charmèd customer, have retitled it for the $1.69 trade as *The Romance of Great Books and Their Authors*. Under whatever title or price, a book of delight, most ownable. Mr. Winterich retells, with cunningly proportioned sentiment, comedy, and bibliographic scholarship, the intimate story of twenty of the supreme books in one language.

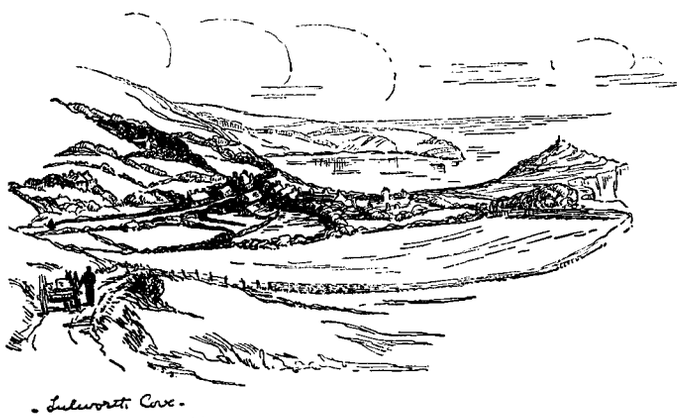
As I read I felt a queer subconscious hankering for something that wasn't there. It was an evening of brightness and cold, with plenty of snow outdoors and fire in the chimney: and suddenly I remembered. It was St. Agnes Eve, and I hadn't yet done my annual re-reading of the poem. The fact that Mr. Winterich hadn't included anything about Keats brought my devoir back to mind.

Among my own private rituals, which surely need not disturb any other reader, the month of January begins with Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson and then passes on to John Keats. I will justly be accused of blasphemy if I remark that both Keats and Watson were physicians who forsook their profession for literature. But on a long winter evening I think as I please. It pleases me, for instance to consider that Guy's Hospital, where Keats studied, was founded by a bookseller. See what I learned in Defoe's *Tour Through England and Wales:* "Guy's Hospital, to be built and endowed at the sole charge of one Mr. Thomas Guy, formerly a bookseller in Lombard Street. . . . How Mr. Guy amass'd all this wealth, having been himself in no publick employment or office of trust, or profit, and only carrying on the trade of a bookseller, that is not the business of this book; 'tis enough to say, he was a thriving, frugal man. He was never married, and lived to be above eighty years old."

Incidentally, one of my favorite lines in medical writing is in Keats's hospital notebook; he took it down from one of Astley Cooper's lectures:—

"In diseases Medical Men guess, if they cannot ascertain a disease they call it nervous."

It is thirty years since the late Albert Elmer Hancock—good friend and good teacher—used to talk to us about Keats in the old classroom in Chase Hall at Haverford. He was then finishing his interesting book on Keats (Houghton Mifflin) which perhaps is alternately too sentimental and too graduate-school in temper for our present case. We know now, for instance, that Fanny Brawne was not the insensible minx of legend. The *Letters of Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats,* so long and quietly held by the late Fred Holland Day and published only a year



KEATS'S LAST VIEW OF ENGLAND
Drawn by Mary Seymour Brooks.

ago by the Oxford Press, have altered that picture. (Nothing in that heart-warming little book is more pleasant than to find F. B., quite naturally and charmingly resuming, about the end of 1821, her interest in feminine concerns and debating with poor young Fanny Keats the details of coiffure and millinery.) But what I have specially in mind was how Dr. Hancock used to lay emphasis on some historical or geographical basis for the *Eve of St. Agnes.* Porphyro, he used to say, "is manifestly Italian. Madeline, though apparently an English name, is so close to Madeleine that it might be a French name given to a German maiden." The name of Madeline's bloodthirsty kinsman "dwarfish Hildebrand" is "full-blooded Germanic." The fact that these revellers drank Rhenish and mead (said Dr. Hancock with the guileless ecstasy of a scholar) "is certainly proof of Germanic tastes." "The conditions are satisfied philologically and historically by an identification of this feud with the war of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. . . . Porphyro would belong to the papal faction and Madeline's relatives would be attached to the party of the German emperor."

This, which we boys dutifully annotated so many years ago, and intuitively disregarded, seems to me now most exquisitely unimportant. It would be equally absurd to ask why the groceries were kept in Madeline's bedroom cupboard, or to wonder how the Hildebrand family got along without central heating (unless because they were "full-blooded Germanic"). It would be just as absurd to wonder how so deliciously impalpable a poem came to be written at a village prosaically named Bedhampton, and while the poet was staying with friends called Mr. and Mrs. John Snook.

Indeed, Dr. Hancock bestirred himself to account for the presence of the candied fruits and syrups in the closet by the fact that folk-lore reports "a cold collation of bread and cheese" was often laid on such occasions to cajole the wooing masculine ghost. He quoted *The Folk-Lore of Lincolnshire:* "a supper may be set out to lure the man's spirit." This is all very well as folk-lore, but it approaches dangerously near the comic when introducing wary youngsters to a divinely beautiful thing. "Analyze the narrative," said our instructor firmly. But I'm wondering. Isn't it safer not to?

As to why the bright-colored jellies and syrups, probably Kipling came closer to suggestion in his remarkable story "Wireless" which is presumably known to every Keats student.

Quite unadvisedly, without intent, I fear I have butted skull-on into one of the most difficult dilemmas of literary teaching. I suppose, if you are hoping to initiate a group of youths into the troubling loveliness of art, you have to throw up a screen of "facts" or what can be offered as facts; behind which both student and teacher may hide while private intuitions blink and clarify. Shall we pretend, just for the sake of classroom and notebook, that this is about the Guelphs and Ghibellines—until you can get back to your room (some snowy night) and perform that secret identification with self which is the glamor of poetry. Hancock was an understanding teacher: you may be quite sure that he had thought about such things.

If I wanted to make modern youth feel that Keats was not far away, I should tell them that his nickname for Fanny Brawne's younger sister was "Tootts." See the *Letters* (M. B. Forman) II, 567.

If it were a question of data, I think I

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myself should prefer to be told, not that dwarfish Hildebrand's castle was probably "in the foothills of the Alps," but where was Bedhampton? I've never spotted it in my atlases: but it can't be very far from Portsmouth, as when the *Maria Crowther* was weatherbound in that harbor Keats landed and went over to spend a few hours with the Snooks. Another place I hanker to know about—because the poor fellow had planned to go there but never did—is Bradley in South Devon. It was recommended as good villégiature by Miss Jeffrey in the summer of 1819, when Keats was alternating whether to take a post as surgeon aboard a ship trading to India, or to "conquer my indolence and strain my nerves at some grand Poem." The only comment I have noticed on Bradley is in a footnote in Maurice Buxton Forman's edition of the *Letters*. He says: "Bradley and its beautiful woods lie a little to the west of Newton Abbot. If Miss Jeffrey had suggested a stay at Bradley, she knew how to choose a spot for a poet." It was while discussing this choice that Keats made his strange remark: "One of the great reasons that the English have produced the finest writers in the world is, that the English world has ill-treated them during their lives and foster'd them after their deaths."

My own boyish curiosity—as well as I can tell by looking back at the copy of the Poems I read and marked at the time—was much in verbal details. I was dismayed—still am—at the infelicity of the repeated syllable in the very first stanza:—

Like pious incense from a *censer* old

which I noted as "ugly!" Again (stanza XVII) I was grieved by the words *beard* and *bears* in the same line; and in XXI, when Porphyro hides in the maiden's chamber "pleased amain," the young perfectibilian censored this as "bathos?" In XXXVI the phrase *pattering the sharp sleet* won the marginal note "the very sound!" And so it is. I paused outdoors last night, in our rustic woodland where a fine snow was falling but without wind, to notice how different the sound: a soft persisting hiss.

It is no longer possible, after you have lived with a poem for thirty years, to cast back into the sensibility of the first acquaintance. You are by now no longer a reader but a collaborator; and also perhaps loth to admit so many associative radiations. As Keats wrote to Haydon (only a few weeks after the *Eve of St. Agnes* was written) "I will not spoil my love of gloom by writing an Ode to Darkness."—And he added, "With respect to my livelihood, I will not write for it,—for I will not run with that most vulgar of all crowds, the literary."—If one ever starts quoting the Letters, there can scarcely be an end, but I choose one more line. In the same message to Haydon (March 1819) he made that deeply plumbing criticism of his own writing to that date: "In the height of enthusiasm I have been cheated into some fine passages; but that is not the thing." From then on, and more gravely than before, he was the miser of sound and syllable. It was then too that he was more insistent than ever to think of his lungs as a sore throat—the euphemism recurs endlessly—and, the most casually heartbreaking allusion in all the letters, wrote to his young sister: "I want you to teach me a few common dancing steps." No one needs to be told why: he had met Miss Brawne the previous autumn, and the latest suggestion of the commentators is that they became engaged at Christmas 1818. Surely we do not need to go as far away as Guelph and Ghibelline to know what was in his mind as he wrote the stanzas that come back to us every January on a night of snow. He knew too well, poor Knight-at-arms, what ailed him. Well might he (who had brushed such cobwebs with his lofty plume) dream of lovers fled away into the storm; the storm which was already pattering sharp on his own windows.

The Wrecker

F. T. W. (La Jolla, Calif.) very justly reminds me that one of the places where I read about Findlay's ocean directories was in Stevenson's *The Wrecker*. A full set of Findley's was among the contents of the cabin when they explored the wreck of the *Flying Scud*. "The books were the first to engage our notice," says Loudon Dodd, and the list of them (which Stevenson gives) was carefully considered, even down to Miss Braddon's *Aurora Floyd*, "which has penetrated to every isle of the Pacific."

The wreck of the *Flying Scud* (of Hull) lay on Midway Island. I seem to remember that that mid-Pacific pinpoint is now a station for the flying clippers and has a hotel and presumably a reading room. I hope some of the Pacific pilots have read *The Wrecker*, for I suppose that must be one of Midway Island's few appearances in fiction.

From *The Wrecker* the mind moves naturally to Mr. S. S. McClure, whose lively character gave R. L. S. the suggestion for Jim Pinkerton in the story. Imagine my pleasure in discovering, in M. K.'s office at the Anderson Galleries the other day, a mint-clean copy of one of the fine books published by McClure Phillips in their early days. Here it is, still with its unsoiled paper jacket—*A Sack of Shakings*, by Frank T. Bullen, (1901)—including among many fine essays "Country Life on Board Ship" and "Shakespeare and the Sea."

Mrs. E. C. Moore (N. Y. City), à propos French translations, reports that the London *Observer* lately quoted a French version of the Bishop of Sodor and Man—l'évêque de Siphon et de l'Homme. And insists that Victor Hugo, in *L'Homme Qui Rit*, had someone in Scotland crossing Le Premier de la Quatrième.

Clinical Shop Talk

LEAVES FROM A SURGEON'S CASE-BOOK. By James Harpole. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1938. $2.75.

Reviewed by EDWARD D. CHURCHILL, M.D.

AN experienced clinical teacher invariably shapes a lecture or clinic about the case history of an individual patient and has the patient present, in bed if necessary, while he talks. He knows by instinct that his feet are kept on the ground by having the embodiment of his text before him. Mr. Harpole is a complete master of clinical teaching. The patients from his case-books are wheeled into the amphitheater pit to live, cough, suffer pain, or even die for our instruction. As they are real people, their diseases become real and the conquest of their diseases by science becomes a living story.

As long as Mr. Harpole is standing by the side of a patient he is sound enough in his observations and deductions. All clinical teachers indulge in little asides that are not to be taken too seriously and the lay reader must be on the alert to recognize these tongue-in-the-cheek interpolations. As long as the author proceeds in this vein it is not difficult to forgive minor inaccuracies and a mildly irritating tendency to cherish a provincially British point of view in describing the origins of medical progress. These are the faults of any informal clinical lecture or anecdotal shop-talk.

When Mr. Harpole leaves the bedside to mount the lecture platform, look out for him. There is no patient in the room when he discusses the glands of internal secretion, with the result that sense and nonsense become inextricably scrambled. As for Mr. Harpole's ideas about the future—of course no one will take this delightful, incoherent buncombe seriously.

The style is pleasantly informal, retaining the freedom of non-scientific expression that is found in the clinic but is taboo in serious minded medical publications. Take the description of the patient who "turns pink, swells up all over the face and body like a balloon, and sometimes has the greatest difficulty in breathing." This is very accurate and conveys a vivid impression of what really happens under the circumstances. But try inserting it in a manuscript submitted to a medical periodical. The editorial red pencil will substitute "cutaneous hyperemia, generalized urticaria and dyspnea due to laryngeal edema."

The publishers have chosen to spread the caduceus of Hermes on the cover. While there is ample precedent for using the caduceus with its two coiling serpents as a medical symbol, it should not be confused with the staff of Æsculapius, entwined by a single serpent, the pure and classic symbol of the Healing Art.

Edward D. Churchill is professor of surgery at Harvard University.

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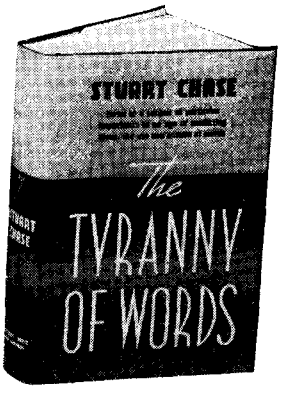

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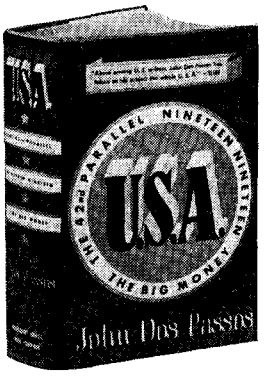

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The Professional Writer

(*Continued from page 4*)

ative instinct. Now this is no counsel of perfection; it is the only condition on which the artist can work his way towards the unattainable perfection that is his aim. If he is a novelist he uses his experience of people and places, his apprehension of himself, his love and hate, his deepest thoughts, his passing fancies, to draw in one work after another a picture of life. It can never be more than a partial one, but if he is fortunate he will succeed in the end in doing something else; he will draw a complete picture of himself.

At all events to think thus is a consolation when you cast your eye over the publishers' advertisements. When you read those long lists of books and when you discover that reviewers have extolled their wit, profundity, originality, and beauty your heart sinks; what chance have you in comparison with so much genius? The publishers will tell you that the average life of a novel is ninety days. It is hard to reconcile yourself to the fact that a book into which you have put, besides your whole self, several months of anxious toil, should be read in three or four hours and after so short a period forgotten. Though it will do him no good, there is no author so small-minded as not to have a secret hope that some part at least of his work will survive him for a generation or two. The belief in posthumous fame is a harmless vanity which often reconciles the artist to the disappointments and failure of his life. How unlikely he is to attain it we see when we look back on the writers who only twenty years ago seemed assured of immortality. Where are their readers now? And with the mass of books that are constantly produced and the ceaseless competition of those that have lived on, how small is the likelihood that work that has been once forgotten will ever be again remembered! There is one very odd, and some may think very unfair, thing about posterity; it seems to choose the works to which it gives attention from those of authors who have been popular in their lifetime. The writers who delight a clique and never reach the great public will never delight posterity, for posterity will never hear about them. It is a consolation to the popular authors who have had it impressed upon them that their popularity was sufficient proof of their worthlessness. It may be that Shakespeare, Scott, and Balzac did not write for the minor sage of Chelsea, but it looks as though they did write for after ages. The writer's only safety is to find his satisfaction in his own performance. If he can realize that in the liberation of soul which his work has brought him and in the pleasure of shaping it in such a way as to satisfy to some extent at least his esthetic sense, he is amply rewarded for his labors, he can afford to be indifferent to the outcome.

For the disadvantages and dangers of the author's calling are offset by an advantage so great as to make all its difficulties, disappointments, and maybe hardships, unimportant. It gives him spiritual freedom. To him life is a tragedy and by his gift of creation he enjoys the catharsis, the purging of pity and terror, which Aristotle tells us is the object of art. For his sins and his follies, the unhappiness that befalls him, his unrequited love, his physical defects, illness, privation, his hopes abandoned, his griefs, humiliations, everything is transformed by his power into material and by writing it he can overcome it. Everything is grist to his mill, from the glimpse of a face in the street to a war that convulses the civilized world, from the scent of a rose to the death of a friend. Nothing befalls him that he cannot transmute into a stanza, a song, or a story, and having done this be rid of it. The artist is the only free man.

Perhaps that is why the world on the whole has had the profound suspicion of him that we know. It is not sure that he can be trusted when he reacts to the common impulses of men so unaccountably. And indeed the artist, to the indignation of mankind, has never felt himself bound by ordinary standards. Why should he? With men in general the primary end of thought and action is to satisfy their needs and preserve their being; but the artist satisfies his needs and preserves his being by the pursuit of art: their pastime is his grim earnest and so his attitude to life can never be the same as theirs. He creates his own values. Men think him cynical because he does not attach importance to the virtues and is not revolted by the vices that move them. He is not cynical. But what they call virtue and what they call vice are not the sort of things that he takes any particular interest in. They are indifferent elements in the scheme of things out of which he constructs his own freedom. Of course common men are quite right to be indignant with him. But that isn't going to do him any good. He is incorrigible.

The foregoing article constitutes a section of W. Somerset Maugham's forthcoming book, "The Summing Up," shortly to be published by Doubleday, Doran & Co.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 200)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE—"SONNETS"

In him those holy antique hours are seen,
Without all ornament, itself and true,
Making no summer of another's green,
Robbing no old to dress his beauty new;
And him as for a map doth Nature store
To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

Marching Through Communist Georgia

PROMETHEUS AND THE BOLSHEVIKS. By John Lehmann. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. $3.75.

Reviewed by EUGENE LYONS

PROMETHEUS has joined the Communist Party. One day a brigade of six Soviet shock-troopers climbed to his mountainside. They unfurled a huge red flag. One of them spoke: "Comrade Prometheus, we have been sent here to liberate you in the name of the new Soviet Government of Georgia. We bring you the revolutionary greetings of the toiling masses, who see in you the great historic ancestor of all fighters for the benefit of humanity." These preliminaries disposed of, they unchained the much-abused god. For fifteen years thereafter he wandered on Soviet soil, and, being inured to suffering, seems to have liked everything he saw. So he signed up in the Party.

All of this happened in a dream that came to John Lehmann as he sailed from Soviet Georgia after a visit of several months. Comrade Prometheus, being duly inscribed as a member, is now presumably ready for his second liquidation. We may look for his name in the lists of executions reaching us from Stalin's native Caucasus.

The dream is no more far-fetched and no less credible than some of the things Mr. Lehmann saw and heard in his waking trance, and records in this politico-economic-literary travel book. He has inspected "Georgia's socialist civilization, in this fascinating phase of construction" and found it to be "a new civilization, vigorous as a young horse." Everything in his pages is high-pitched with uncritical faith. Vera, his interpreter, smiles "with the easy confidence of one born to power." She informs him about the Tiflis park amusements that "Georgians, like Russians, are very pleased to jump from a tower." A group of theatrical and literary people charged with showing the English visitor the wonders of that prancing young horse assure him that Soviet art is free, creative, uncensored. By way of illustrating the marvels of socialism one of the writers reveals that he gets "anything from one hundred to five hundred rubles for a single poem, for instance. Not bad, is it?"

The dates are not clear, but it may have reached Mr. Lehmann's ears since he visited Soviet Georgia that Akhmatelli and other leaders of the free creative theatre have been purged, along with leading local Communist Party and government heads. Perhaps he has begun to suspect that his Georgian comrades were pulling his leg with all that shrill boasting of freedom and happiness and new civilizations.

I thought I was familiar with all the alibis for the totalitarian censorship of

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literature under the Soviets, but Mr. Lehmann transmits a brand-new one without so much as a shrug of doubt. Among the reasons why "anything of a definite counter-revolutionary tendency" cannot get published, a Tiflis writer confided, is that the publishers "know they wouldn't sell enough copies to make it pay." For naive faith in propaganda fairy tales this probably sets a new record.

Discounting the author's rather puerile glee over every spoonful of sociological and cultural information fed to him, the book has some value as a travel story in a little-known and romantically diversified area. Where Mr. Lehmann trusts his own senses, the book is valid and interesting. Where he listens to the propagandists and his eager wishful thinking comes into play, he achieves some fantastic judgments.

Banshees and Koholds

THE BULLS OF SPRING. By Jake Falstaff. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1937. $2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

HERMAN FETZER, who took the pen name of "Jake Falstaff" and had been called "an Ohio farm boy who looked like Balzac and could—and did on occasion write like Rabelais," first started a column called "Pippins and Cheese" on the Akron *Times*, and finally took it to the Cleveland *Press*. He became well-known as a journalist who used to pinch hit for F. P. A. during the latter's vacations from his own column on the old New York *World*. He was at work on a novel of farm life when he died suddenly of pneumonia two years ago. He loved the peasant lore of the immigrants of his region. It was out of such stories that he evolved the personality of Reini Kugel, who "walks alone" in half a dozen poems at the end of this book.

In poetry "Jake Falstaff" was what might be called, in slang phrase, "a natural." His fantasias are unfettered. He took life with tremendous gusto and sang spontaneously and freshly. "Swampy frogs," he cries, "knitting your little thunder"; or is just as suddenly taken with a vision of the coming of the sons of God to the daughters of men, and makes a ballad of the Nephelim. His love poems are fleshly, but full of delight and tenderness. He liked all sorts of animals, and believed also in banshee and kobold and "the water-folk, ganderbilled and toed." Long ago I clipped his most amusing sonnet, about the "girl named Hetty" and himself at the theater, from a current newspaper. "Jake Falstaff" did not take himself too seriously, though he could also write angrily. But those who like all the colors of healthy life, and of "Cossack words, striking and riding," will find refreshment in his book. He should have lived to give us more of this eccentric and untrammeled poetry!

A Jewish Prize Novel

TOMORROW'S BREAD. By Beatrice Bisno. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by ISAAC GOLDBERG

THERE is a fierce white light that beats not upon a throne but upon prize awards. It is in such a radiance that this novel comes to us, after having been selected by Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Fannie Hurst, and Edwin Wolf, 2nd, as the winner of the $2,500 prize offered by the Jewish Publication Society of America for the best fiction of Jewish interest submitted during the past year.

Miss Bisno was well prepared for her task. A Chicagoan by birth, she was educated at Columbia and New York universities; she has had long and intimate experience with the labor problems of which her novel is largely compounded; she has traveled widely, and has been a journalist. She is at present Personnel Director of the Home Relief Bureau. Chiefly, so far as concerns her novel, she has been associated with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and its president, Sidney Hillman.

"Tomorrow's Bread" is the story of Sam Karenski and of the Jewish toilers, Chicagoans and New Yorkers, whom he was eager to band together into an invincible union of needle workers. It is a tale that is focussed now upon the leader and his frustrations, now upon the followers and the conditions against which they have to contend. Amongst the followers we discover a too-too-humanness that helps to keep them divided; in the leader we discover likewise a too-too-humanness that divides him against himself. The result is that Sam Karenski, personally, dies a failure; he has built, however, for the morrow.

With this as central theme, Miss Bisno peoples her pages with a long procession of types, many of them hardly flattering to the race, whether we qualify that noun as Jewish or as human. They are a grubbing, sensual lot who respond, nevertheless, to the visions of the few who rise from the ruck. They are themselves the human dough of which tomorrow's bread is being made.

Yet, despite the attractiveness of this theme, it can hardly be said that the author has succeeded with it. She does not, for one thing, write with distinction. She has not the gift of creating characters who live on the page. Her attempt to suggest Yiddish idiom by literal translation frequently results in unintentionally humorous passages. The story, for all the occasionally interesting details, exhibits a curious staticism.

It is quite possible that Miss Bisno, in her determination not to write a self-consciously "proletarian" novel, made the mistake of underemphasizing her material and her basic theme. For there is, throughout the book, a strange suggestion of reticence and evasiveness.

F.T.S.

☞"In April and May," asseverates P. E. G. Quercus, "our favorite publisher is always the Facsimile Text Society, which issues such delicious replicas of famous rarities at minuscule price—think of an exact facsimile of Donne's *Anatomie of the World* (1621) 'wherein the frailtie and the decay of this whole World is represented,' for One Buck."

☞Lucky Quercus! This year he doesn't have to wait until Spring. Right now the Facsimile Text Society is publishing three more books, bringing to forty-three the total of "delicious replicas" available. The new books are:

The General Magazine (1741), published by Benjamin Franklin
Manuductio ad Ministerium (1726), by Cotton Mather
Pandora (1584), by John Soowthern

☞Among the volumes previously published, each one an exact facsimile of the original edition, are: *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), by William Hill Brown (the *first* American novel); *Poems* (1820) by John Keats; *Poems on Several Occasions* (1748), by Thomas Warton; *Poems* (1831), by Edgar Allen Poe; *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge; *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (1859), translated by Edward FitzGerald; *Areopagitica* (1644), by John Milton.

☞Quercus further deposes: "People who are keen about literature, if they should write for the little microcosmographic catalogue of the Facsimile Text Society, what fun could be had. You can join the Society for $5.00, which gives you 25% discount on all their books." And Quercus is right again. The 1938 catalogue is now ready. It tells about all these books. It shows you reproductions of all the title pages. It explains the membership system Quercus hints at. Why delay? The catalogue is free. You'll thank Quercus—and us, too—if you write now to the address below for *your* copy.

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Report on a City

A SOCIAL STUDY OF PITTSBURGH: Community Problems and Social Services in Allegheny County. By Philip Klein and Collaborators. New York: Columbia University Press. 1938. $4.75.

Reviewed by RAYMOND G. FULLER

THIS is primarily, and ostensibly, a technical report of a three-year professional study of social-work organization and services, with recommendations for next steps in developing and coördinating these services in accordance with needs and resources of city and county. But the book is much more important and valuable than such a statement of purpose and function may imply. Written by social workers for social workers—or at least for social workers and laymen interested in social work—there emerges from its formidable mass of findings a vitally significant picture of human needs and social forces in a community that has become "a symbol of economic and industrial history in America."

More than a third of the book—the whole of Part I—is devoted to description and interpretation of the general social and economic life of the community as "the background and matrix of social work." Here we are told how the early exploiters of this region of coal and steel, "attentive to the advantages of river sites for their heavy industries," paid less attention to the "suitability of these narrow valleys for an industrial population" and did not allow sufficient room for "the expansion of their plants and the resulting growth of communities." We are shown that "poverty is rampant in the industrial environs of Pittsburgh even in what we have called normal times; that poverty by whatever name we choose to designate the frequent occurrence of economic distress in the working population is the chief social problem of life; that it necessarily confronts the community, not only in the dire need for assistance, but also in distressing conditions of housing and health, in precarious morale, in subversive social attitudes."

But subversive social attitudes are manifested no more in "radical" thought and action than in denials of civil rights and suppression of liberal opinion, especially during crises in industrial relations. Organized labor with outside affiliations represents but a small fraction of the laboring population, and the prevailing attitudes among that population are not revolutionary but capitalistic—with some hopes of improvement through labor organization and through politics and the vote. Dr. Klein writes:

> In a community so heavily weighted with foreign-born labor the workers' frame of mind resembles the ancient continental attitude of peasant to landlord: envy, distrust and adoration; veneration mixed with contempt; fear coupled with hatred; all diluted by the stoic indifference which is induced by the more or less successful effort to gain one's daily bread and rear one's family in peace. There is, however, a consciousness on the part of the laborer that he is capable of recklessness and that there is an ageless score of the poor against the rich; a willingness to accept charity and even to demand it; gratitude, but readiness for a tongue-in-cheek type of irresponsibility that to get something for nothing from the rich, from the government, from any established form of power involves no question of ethics.

But the public opinion that rules Pittsburgh emanates from its dominant economic group, which is not the labor group. It is "politically and economically conservative and often militantly orthodox," has "incomparably greater control of the channels of publicity," and is "the really effective public opinion in the scope of social work." This book, in its analysis and discussion of these matters, and of community cleavages and conflicts of various kinds (racial and religious as well as economic), is comparable with the Lynds' classic study of "Middletown." It exhibits the operation of similar forces in a more complex environment among a less homogeneous population.

One realizes that Dr. Klein was not intending to write another "Middletown"—for a big industrial city—but he and his collaborators have made a definite and highly important contribution to the sociological portraiture of American life in what is both a community and, because the people to so large an extent are "unassimilated, inexperienced, and divided," not a community.

Raymond G. Fuller is a sociologist and author of several books on child labor.

Thunder on the Right

VICTORIAN CRITICS OF DEMOCRACY. By Benjamin E. Lippincott. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. 1938. $3.75.

Reviewed by GEORGE C. HOMANS

PROFESSOR LIPPINCOTT'S book is an analysis and appraisal of the adverse criticism directed at what they conceived to be the trend of their times by six eminent Victorians: Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, James Fitzjames Stephen, Henry Maine, and William Lecky. The development of democracy was not everything these men found dangerous, but all of them found that, at least, dangerous, and around that question their criticism can conveniently be grouped. Of course democracy as the machinery of government in a particular country at a particular time was not usually what they attacked, but rather the theology, the dogmas of democracy. They were more concerned with the famous abstractions: liberty, equality, fraternity, and with what they felt to be their implications for the future than they were with any actual Parliament or Congress and the laws passed in any given year. They were more irritated by the democratic intellectuals than they were by the democratic politicians. And like all such men, they proceeded to imitate their opponents. They set up abstractions of their own: the hero, aristocracy, authority, in opposition to the abstractions of democracy. Each party then walked round and round its own statues in vociferous admiration. Neither developed a theory of the function in fact performed in government by the religion of democracy.

Professor Lippincott has produced a useful summary of the opinions of the few Victorians who conspicuously did not believe that the progress of mankind was likely to be onward and upward forever. It

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE MISSING LINK *Carolyn Wells* (Lippincott: $2.)	Men who eats peach kernels perishes poisonously: lovely matron also dies. Fleming Stone connects two deaths and all is jake.	Not so skimpy as some recent Wells *opera*. Reveals a beautiful but dumb lass (named Tonka) and adequate sleuthing.	According to Hoyle
MURDER WITHOUT MOTIVE *R. L. Goldman* (Coward-McCann: $2.)	Reporter Rufus Reed traces killing of unimportant tramp to high places and uncovers wickedness in sacrosanct circles.	Solution slightly phony, but events leading up to it are reasonably exciting, with newspaper city room atmosphere pleasantly portrayed.	Able
DEATH IS THY NEIGHBOR *Laurence D. Smith* (Lippincott: $2.)	Long Island beach cottage scene of two uncanny killings, considerable intrigue, and subtle sleuthing by young lawyer.	Humorous interludes by ex-strip-tease dancer are slightly overdone; otherwise a logically worked out and entertaining yarn.	Passes muster
THE "Q" SQUAD *Gerald Verner* (Macaulay: $2.)	Master Criminal No. 9765 baffles Scotland Yard, pursues lovely gal, but Insp. Lake—and love—conquer all.	Engaging variation on a well-worn theme with bombs, bullion, sneaky stool-pigeons and all the familiar trappings.	Routine

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is useful especially in recalling to our minds that some men did think so even in those days. Carlyle and Ruskin go almost unread; the very names of Stephen, Maine, and Lecky are being forgotten. The trouble with the book from my point of view is that its author does just what the men he is commenting on did. He sets up a theology and, according as they did or did not agree with his theology, he accepts or rejects the views of the Victorian critics of democracy. Take a sentence like this: "The very fact that humanitarianism was based on a feeling of pity instead of on an idea of justice, on what was so largely emotional instead of on what was rational, tended to dissociate it from reason." Let Professor Lippincott apply Mr. Stuart Chase's newly discovered method of definition by operations to this "justice" which seems to be "rational."

To be sure, the writings of the Victorian critics of democracy were not simply a part of a war of words. There was much that was seriously the trouble in England, and Carlyle and the rest were thrashing about uneasily trying to specify just what it was. My own feeling is that the politician Disraeli came closer to succeeding than did any of the intellectuals, when he wrote in "Coningsby": "It is not in the increased feebleness of its institutions that I see the peril of England; it is in the decline of its character as a community. . . . Rely upon it that England should think more of the community and less of the government."

Islands of Adventure

THESE ARE THE VIRGIN ISLANDS. By Hamilton Cochran. New York: Prentice-Hall. 1937. $3.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

MR. COCHRAN, as a member for two years of our Government staff in the Virgin Islands, had both the need and the opportunity to know his province well. He has written an agreeable book, mostly about buried treasure, pirates, and insurrections interleaved with personal adventures. He sought doubloons in caves and graveyards, traced the lairs of pirates, and discovered in the hills of St. John and St. Croix the tragic relics of the two great slave revolts, those of 1733 and 1878, when the Europeans were massacred by warrior Negroes of the African Amina tribe, and the islands desolated. When St. Thomas was owned by Denmark only a hundred years ago, it was fruitful and prosperous, exporting sugar, coffee, rum, and tobacco; now our orphan Virgins cost us more than a quarter of a million dollars annually.

Mr. Cochran has enlivened his story of the islands with their own past, for, except scenically, they are pretty dull places today. There are werewolves still, of course, if you have the Negro vision, and obeah doctors to waste you by "remote control," and seasonal hurricanes, but the old days were the more spirited. Those were the days when pirates wore firecrackers in their beards, and when liquor was cheap.

Here is a spicy account of the Virgin Islands.

10,000 Book Auctions

AMERICAN BOOK AUCTION CATALOGUES 1713-1934. Compiled by George L. McKay. New York: The New York Public Library. 1937. $3.50.

AMERICAN BOOK PRICES CURRENT 1936-1937. Compiled by Mary Houston Warren. New York: R. R. Bowker Co. 1937. $15 ($13.50 *cash with order*).

Reviewed by JOHN T. WINTERICH

THERE have been some ten thousand book auctions in America—a figure which Mr. McKay here elaborates in a detailed and comprehensive breakdown that extends to 540 pages. The earliest auction of record was announced in the *Boston News-Letter* for May 25, 1713, which declared that "Catalogues will be posted at Publick Places." These catalogues, Mr. Brigham surmises, may have been broadsides or mere written lists—no one knows, or is ever likely to.

In July of 1717 the library of "curious and valuable" books owned by "the late Reverend & Learned Mr. Ebenezer Pemberton" was dispersed at Boston, and a single copy of this first recordable American book-auction catalogue survives in the New York Public Library—an acquisition from the great Brinley collection. The Pemberton relics comprised, as one might expect, divinity, philosophy, history, and (as one might not expect) poetry, "generally well bound."

But these events, noteworthy though they are in the chronicles of American bookselling, may yet have to yield the palm of priority to an earlier vendue. Following Mr. McKay's major explorations is a section listing auctions before 1801 for which the authorities do not cite catalogues, and this division must have occasioned him an infinite amount of grubbing. First in the category is a minute from the Court of Burgomasters and Schepans of New Amsterdam, April 18, 1662, which reads: "Anna Claas Croezens, widow of Daniel Litschoe, deceased, requests by petition to be allowed to sell by the Bailiff some books which she has belonging to Sir Herry Moedy [Sir Henry Moody?], as according to obligation she has a claim on him for a considerable sum." The petition was granted. Did the bailiff duly hawk the books? And was the improvident but literate Sir Harry distressed? Herein, too, history has occasionally repeated itself in the intervening two and three-quarter centuries.

Volume XLIII in the essential series of "American Book Prices Current" appears earlier in the season than has any of its predecessors. Since its consultative value parallels that of a timetable or a schedule of stock-exchange transactions, the improved tempo is a highly palpable benefit. Moreover, with the issuance of the new volume, the publishers are instituting a service that will accelerate the process even further. A subscription to "American Book Prices Current Serially" is clubbed with the book, or, at $5 a year, will be supplied anyone interested only in the current auction season. The serial will make auction prices generally available within two weeks.

While not strictly an eleemosynary enterprise, "American Book Prices Current" has never proved, or been intended to prove, a profit-making venture. A year-round staff, under the competent supervision of Miss Warren, labors efficiently to produce a manual whose market is restricted to a small and specialized group. The lower price (the units in the series have long sold for $20 each) and the addition of the serial, to be edited by Jacob Blanck, should give the manual a wider institutional distribution. Any library which is fortunate enough to receive considerable donations of books would do well to equip itself with A. B. P. C., which it is not likely to receive as a donation. The manual can quickly pay its own way.

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The New Books

Fiction

MR. WITT AMONG THE REBELS. By Ramón J. Sender. Houghton Mifflin. 1938. $2.50.

Doubtless the majority of American readers will be surprised to learn from Ramón Sender's novel that sixty years ago there was already a Spanish Republic, and that it, too, was involved in civil war. The hesitant Madrid régime of those days, having deposed an imported Italian monarch, turned republican, but was soon faced by factional movements much like those that weakened the 1931 republic and prepared the way for Franco's stroke. Sender's story imagines that a respectable Victorian Englishman, an engineer employed at the Cartagena dockyard, finds himself in the midst of an abortive attempt to establish a worker's republic there. The fleet in the harbor mutinies; his lovely Andalusian wife openly supports the rebels; almost a year passes before the "Federalists" are crushed. Meanwhile Mr. Witt has been having a bad time of it, and his domestic happiness is one of the casualties of the rebellion.

This fable perhaps has a more general significance than might at first appear. Mr. Witt's is the fate of all well disposed but lukewarm onlookers at revolutionary bonfires. The forlorn history of the Cantón, stamped out in fire and blood in 1873, must have seemed to Señor Sender to present many obvious lessons for the Spain of 1935. Though this warning to the vacillating Madrid politicians went unheeded, the fault cannot have been the author's, for he has brought both imaginative power and effective irony to these descriptions of how a revolt is bred. He does not, however, always succeed in blending the almost comic tale of Mr. Witt's sufferings with the more serious episodes provided by history. The book is not one of this important author's more notable works, and it may well puzzle American readers, but it has its merits considered as a revolutionary sermonette directed at the liberals of the world. The translator has been valiant under unusual difficulties.

T. P., Jr.

STAR RISING. By Clarence Budington Kelland. Harpers. 1938. $2.

They called the baby that was left in a theatre seat East Lynne, because that was the show that had been playing in the theatre, and a group of benign local characters, including the district political boss, took charge of her. Of course she grew up, became a lovely problem, decided for the stage, went to New York, had one hefty football admirer at Yale, one elderly rich admirer in Manhattan, and was offered a career by a kind of prototype of Noel Coward. Then came the murder mystery. But we hadn't thought that Mr. Kelland set out to write merely a murder mystery, involving—of course—the real parentage of East Lynne. Frankly, Mr. Kelland can write better than this, and more amusingly. He has purveyed comedies that turned into talkies for Eddie Cantor and Leslie Howard, which were decidedly better. It is a pity he didn't give himself more time between rapid-fire farces.

W. R. B.

Miscellaneous

CECIL BEATON'S SCRAPBOOK. Scribners. 1937. $7.50.

Cecil Beaton, that spectacular photographer and pet of café society, has whipped together a choice selection from his memory books, and the result is a volume which is the last word in snob-appeal. You gather that he gets around a lot, that he knows everybody who glitters, and that he never throws anything away. The best of his photographs are here superbly reproduced, the great and the beautiful of two continents portrayed as handsomely as possible. Only once does Mr. Beaton succumb to malice and show us how he retouched a beefy dowager into looking like a member of the human race, but that awful example is enough to make us understand why so many photographers are misanthropic and jaundiced men.

He writes, too. Many of the articles have appeared in *Vogue* and similar magazines, and are the highly personal, gossip column sort of thing. Mr. Beaton's style would be improved by the use of those scissors of his on the adjectives, which tend to pile up and muffle his effect. His drawings, of which many are reproduced in color, are uniformly charming, and show his great flair for fashion and the theater.

The effect, however, of all these Monas and Elsas and Osberts and Noels is rather cloying when taken in large doses, agreeable as it is a few pages at a time, and leaves you wondering wistfully what would happen if Mr. Beaton took his camera and paintbox to Kansas, just for a change.

A. D.

LLOYD'S: THE GENTLEMEN AT THE COFFEE-HOUSE. By Ralph Straus. Carrick & Evans. 1938. $3.75.

This is a perfectly straightfaced and unexceptionable history of an institution to whose methods large portions of the British public have sometimes taken violent exception. The author has a number of technical difficulties, for the records of the early coffee-house where underwriters met were not kept, and the records of the association that followed it were destroyed by fire during Victorian days. Mr. Straus is therefore driven to the employment of two not altogether compatible techniques. In dealing with the old Lloyd's Coffee House and the men who met there, technique suggestive—a series of interlinked thumbnail biographies, with sidelights from the public records. On Lloyd's since the fire, technique exploratory—general economic history with personality in the background.

For the reader this produces the further difficulty that the men who made the old Lloyd's were not particularly interesting characters, while the Lloyd's of the last thirty years has developed with the speed of the Hindu magician's palm-tree, so the book tends to drag at the start and bunch at the finish. Moreover, Mr. Straus is more interested in general statement than in anecdote or example. "Unfortunately," he writes, "it was too often the less important business that was recorded. If an actress's pearl necklace, insured for £1,000, is lost in some unlikely place, you may find the event starred as the most important news of the day, whereas an insurance deal involving millions may well pass unnoticed." A point which he emphasizes by not specifying either event.

Yet sentence, paragraph, and chapter are always well-rounded, always urbane. To anyone interested in the history of one little business and how it grew the book is not without interest and not even without importance, rapidly though it brushes across three centuries of a story which is essentially composed of countless lesser stories, too detailed to be noticed in a general work.

F. P.

WEST POINT TODAY. By Kendall Banning. Funk & Wagnalls. 1937. $2.50.

It is about a quarter of a century since "West Point," by Colonel Robert C. Richardson, Jr., was published, and thirty years since General Schaff's mystical tribute to his Alma Mater. However much the Spirit of Old West Point remains the same, the material West Point has changed vastly since these books. It was time that a new book on this famous institution should appear, and Major Banning's volume meets this demand admirably. It covers the familiar aspects of cadet life, which must be understood by any person interested in West Point. It offers as good a defense as can be made for the rather childish brutalities of the initiation of the Fourth classmen into the life of the Academy, has a splendid account of the origin, development, and nature of West Point's famous Honor System, and an equally fine account of the physical training work and the management of the sports program. These phases of cadet life are supplemented by careful, detailed descriptions of some of the more prominent buildings open to visitors. Twenty-six well-chosen illustrations add to the interest of the text. Altogether, this volume is a combined guidebook and interpretation of West Point.

L. H. H.

Travel

EAST OF THE GREAT GLACIER. By Helge Ingstad. Knopf. 1937. $3.

In 1932-33 Helge Ingstad and four other Norwegians occupied, for their government, a sizable strip of the East coast of Greenland. East Greenland, uncharted until the 20th century, has been a bone of contention between Norway and Denmark since 1916; in 1933 the Hague Court of International Justice decided the long dispute in Denmark's favor. This book is not concerned, after a chapter of background, with the status of the territory;

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it merely relates, agreeably but not stirringly, a summer and winter of exploration and trapping.

There is a touch of the schoolmaster about Ingstad, a former lawyer. He is singularly unable to make us feel the icy beauty that Rockwell Kent brings to his accounts of another coast of that strange country, and his lengthy discussion of the migrations of caribou and musk-ox sounds a good deal like a government report. Only in a chapter on experiments in igloo building, and in the account of a sledge trip to Scoresby Sound, when Ingstad and his companion were storm bound for eleven days, do we really get the feel of the country, a sense of its grandeur and emptiness.

It must be hard to write such a pallid book about the Arctic. The author is a trifle too boyish about it all; we could do with less about the antics of the dogs, and a good bit more about how it feels to live on raw bear meat and go to bed in a frozen sleeping bag. Two kinds of people can be trusted to do this subject justice—men like Nansen and Greely who make a factual and methodical record, and the born writers like Apsley Cherry-Garrard whose "Worst Journey in the World" remains untouched for drama. It doesn't do to be chatty about the Arctic.

A. D.

FORBIDDEN ROAD: KABUL TO SAMARKAND. By Rosita Forbes. Dutton. 1937. $3.50.

In the first place the road wasn't forbidden at all, to accredited travelers, but it was made extremely difficult by wary officials and the lack of transport facilities. Ella Maillart, "X.Y.Z," and Ethel Mannin had already visited that part of Soviet Central Asia. Mrs. Forbes went more blithely than they, leaped her hurdles a bit more gracefully, and emerged with a book less positive in its opinions though of sounder stuff, for instead of presenting impressions of her own she has let the land and the people speak for themselves.

From Peshawar, India, she traveled north as eagerly as, on other trips, she has covered deserts and jungles around the world. Kabul, the beautiful, Bamyan and its gigantic Buddhas defaced by Genghiz Khan, Mazari-Sherif, Bokhara, Samarkand, dragged slowly past her like ghosts of the glories they once had been. The living dead men of Balkh, "the mother of the world," instructed her. In Bokhara, in the mud beneath a tractor, she learned from a drunken mechanic that his people were in a state of "suspended animation" despite the Soviet regime, which continually began but never finished anything. "Progress is lovely," said the young professor; "Moscow is a disease," said the ancient woman who had not yet been induced to remove her veil. And in Samarkand Mrs. Forbes found only what other authors have, the ideal uses of education and the inefficient application of them, the fumbled grafting of the new upon the very old.

Her book is chiefly readable for the spirit of it, its excellent humor, its history interlarded with current development, and its dramatic conversion of personal incidents into significant criteria of the scene at large. But more than that in a travel book it would be unfair to ask.

H. D.

Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

GRAND snow-deep nights, and old Pestiferous, walking late in Fantod Forest observed that the white-burdened woods looked like the orchards of a perpetual spring. ☞"Like trees of fruit in April gear," as some poet exclaimed. ☞Amused to see that the reviewers have a new word to play with, *semantics*, started up by Stuart Chase's book. ☞This may send us back to one of our favorite works for casual pleasure, *The Meaning of Meaning* (by Ogden & Richards; Harcourt, Brace, 1923) which has for 15 years given us our own private kind of merriment, which we share with none. ☞Old Q. is taken short with a poem:—

The laughter of scholars,
Subtle, suppressed,
Is ill-paid in dollars
And mostly unguessed.

Philosophers' laughter,
Deep but not loud
Is, many years after,
Made shrill for the crowd.

☞We were thinking of the humorous introduction by Professor J. P. Postgate (of Liverpool) to *The Meaning of Meaning* in which he remarks "The English public is just discovering that in American letters a *My dear*—at the beginning is less familiar than in English whereas *Dear*—is more intimate. I still remember the thrill it gave me to be *My deared* by a young woman across the water of whom I had never heard." ☞We frequently remarked to Alfred Harcourt that the two most entertaining books he has ever published are *The Meaning of Meaning* and the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* by Wittgenstein; but we don't expect anyone to agree; nor do we care. ☞Another volume in the field of semantics which we plan to go to work on presently is *The Structure of Social Action* by Talcott Parsons of Harvard (McGraw-Hill).

☞Young Q. was invited to The Greystone Press's party, held to celebrate the publication of *This Salzburg*, by Count Ferdinand Czernin. Motion pictures in sound of the Salzburg music festivals were shown. Q. was impressed not only by the conducting of Toscanini, by the singing of Lotte Lehmann, by the acting of the puppets in "The Alchemist," but also by the masked and costumed giant (on stilts) and the masquerade dwarf who marched in the summer procession. The last time Young Q. had seen such figures was as a child years ago in front of Steeplechase at Rockaway Beach; and they frightened him almost to death. But the Old Man says that they still cavort at many a Mardi Gras. Eric Mann, the lecturer, told Young Q. that the figures are symbolic. When Emperor Frederick reigned, he once issued an edict suppressing certain political news. Later, the people mocked it by creating two grotesque figures—one too tall to know what was going on beneath him, and the other too short to see what was happening above. ☞Germany isn't far from Salzburg: couldn't these grotesques be persuaded to walk across the border?

☞Houghton Mifflin are announcing two literary fellowships for 1938, "to assist writers with work in progress;" one for a fiction project, one for a non-fiction project: $1,000 each, over & above royalties. Candidates should submit samples of previous work along with a full outline of the projected book for which the award is asked. Applications must be received by Houghton Mifflin by April 1. Further details from the publishers, at 2 Park Street, Boston. ☞Previous winners include E. P. O'Donnell (*Green Margins*) and Jenny Ballou (*Spanish Prelude*).

☞We note that among the Modern Library Giants announced for this spring is *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, with introduction by Dr. A. A. Brill. Old Q. hopes the Modern Library will be sure to precede the "Interpretation of Dreams" by that Virgilian quote which was on the title-page of the original edition, and which is a clue to so much of Freud's thought. It was, as we have noted before, Æneid VII, 312. ☞Bennett Cerf, lecturing to a journalism class recently, gave some interesting dope on reprints. We quote from a Modern Library circular:—

"Modern Library sales reflect the rise and fall in popularity of contemporary American writers. From 1925 to 1930, Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, and Cabell dominated the American section of the Library. Then Dos Passos and Hemingway jumped into the lead, and though they are still high on the lists, they have lately been hard pressed by Faulkner, Caldwell, Wolfe, and John Steinbeck.

"The sale of the classics in the Modern Library is not subject to the violent fluctuations that govern the newer titles. In fact, the figures on books like *The Divine Comedy* and *Don Quixote* are amazingly consistent. *The Canterbury Tales* sold 8301 copies in 1934, and 8303 copies in 1936. Dickens, Thackeray, and Tolstoy go on like clockwork. Meredith has slipped noticeably in the past few years, but Hardy has perked up.

"In four years' time, over 50,000 sets of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (complete in two Modern Library Giants) have been sold. The Modern Library editors think that this is the most astonishing record in their collection."

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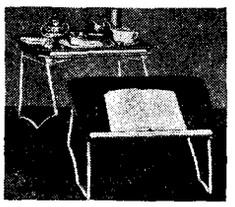

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Authors of the Week

Frazier Hunt

"Spike" Hunt was born in 1885 in Rock Island, Illinois, and spent his boyhood in a small Indiana town. Hunt was educated at the Michigan Military Academy and the University of Illinois. He got his first real job running the local paper in another small Middle Western town. He has worked on newspapers on and off throughout his roving career. Before the World War he ran a plantation in Mexico for several years. When America entered the war he covered training camps for the *New York Sun*, and then Europe and the Western front for the *Chicago Tribune*. Later on, when other reporters were on their way home from Europe, he had the Russian Revolution all to himself, and interviewed Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders. He has known most of the great of the earth of all kinds and varieties, has commented regularly over the radio on world affairs, and now writes newspaper features, magazine articles, and books. In 1911 he married Emma Kern of Urbana, Illinois.

"One American," by Frazier Hunt, is reviewed on page 5.

Mary Borden

Many people think Mary Borden English because, since her marriage in 1918 to Brigadier-General E. L. Spears, she has lived in England and France. But she still remembers Chicago, where she was born in 1886, and the family home in Indiana. Her grandfather, John Borden, sailed down the Ohio in his youth and settled on the Kentucky border of Indiana. She graduated from Vassar College, and then took a trip around the world. For four years during the war she was in France, and organized and ran a large field hospital for the French army. She has five war medals. Her books have been written since the war, and, during this same period she has become known as one of the most brilliant hostesses in London. She lives in a beautiful old house behind Westminster Abbey.

"Strange Week-End," by Mary Borden, is reviewed on page 10.

Storm Jameson

Born in 1897 in Whitby, Yorkshire, Margaret Storm Jameson still lives there, as she loves the Yorkshire coast. She was educated in Whitby at private schools and took honors in English and literature at Leeds University. Miss Jameson later became an expert copy-writer for a large publicity company and conducted a weekly magazine. She has also been a dramatic critic and a publisher, as well as a novelist. Her first fiction was published in 1919. Now she has about fifteen books to her credit, one of which, "The Decline of Merry England," was a historical essay on the rise of the industrial middle class. Miss Jameson (in private life Mrs. Guy Patterson Chapman) likes to ride either a horse or a bicycle, to cook, dance, and drive a car. She collects models and pictures of ships,—and reads all about shipbuilding in her spare time.

"The Moon Is Making," by Storm Jameson, is reviewed on page 7.

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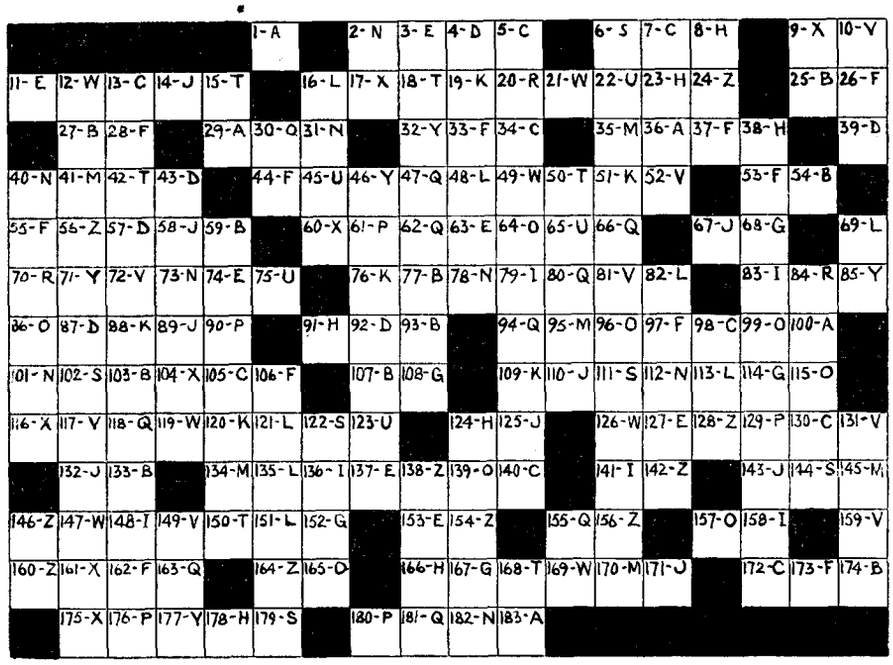
Double-Crostics: No. 201

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary.

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 16 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Frozen.

B. Hot, spiced drink.

C. One who loves work.

D. Color madder violet.

E. Character in "All's Well That Ends Well."

F. Profane person, doomed by the gods to devour himself.

G. Author of "The Dove in the Eagle's Nest."

H. American novelist (1885—).

I. German socialist associated with Marx.

J. Played by rubbing, as with the finger.

K. Adorned elaborately.

L. Rescues from waste.

M. Character in "The Jungle Book."

N. American general and statesman (1733-1804).

O. Loathe in the highest degree.

P. Very stylish (slang).

Q. Lack of mutual attraction.

R. Author of "Barriers Burned Away."

S. Exhibited strong feelings (jocose).

T. Set in order; tidy.

U. Aquatic fish-eating mammal.

V. Expressed again.

W. Dappled.

X. Engages in any enterprise.

Y. Malaceous Eurasian tree.

Z. A twist, turn.

WORDS

100 36 183 1 29

59 103 27 54 77 174 93 25 107 133

7 13 130 34 105 172 98 140 5

57 4 87 39 92 43

63 3 11 153 74 127 137

162 37 28 106 173 44 33 55 97 53 26

152 68 108 114 167

178 124 91 38 23 8 166

148 136 83 158 79 141

125 89 132 143 14 67 58 110 171

19 120 51 109 88 76

16 135 69 151 113 48 121 82

145 95 35 134 170 41

101 78 2 40 31 182 73 112

30 157 165 86 64 99 139 96 115

129 176 180 61 90

163 181 47 118 62 94 80 155 66

20 70 84

122 6 144 102 111 179

18 150 168 42 15 50

45 65 75 22 123

72 10 131 149 159 52 117 81

21 119 169 126 147 12 49

17 104 175 60 116 161 9

71 85 32 177 46

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